

The WORD

New Century Version



NEW TESTAMENT

Clearly Translated For Our Times

The WORD

New Century Version

In past days, not many people read their Bibles daily, for a very good reason.

Not many people could understand what they read.

And not many people knew what to do about their problem.

One solution was to loosely paraphrase God's Word in an attempt to simplify it. Many people rushed out to buy a paraphrase only to find it took too many liberties with the Bible.

Few people found hope in fine print study Bibles that had more "notes and aids" than scripture. They were left bewildered, not feeling good about paraphrases or complex reference Bibles either.

Now there is an **alternative!**

The **New Century Version** clearly translates the New Testament without paraphrasing. It is so fresh and easy-to-understand, we simply call it **The WORD**.

Let us introduce it to you.

A crystal clear alternative

The **New Century Version** of the New Testament is the first phase of a major Bible translation project. It was begun in 1973 by the World Bible Translation Center and will be completed with the planned release of the Old Testament. This crystal clear new version can be used for personal devotional reading and group study, and yet it still has the dignity necessary for public reading.

Why a new translation?

A quick review of the history of English Bible translations reveals a healthy cycle of new versions. William Tyndale's translation, which led to the King James Version of 1611, stimulated 38 new translations and editions within 30 years of his death in 1536.

During the turn of the century—1890 to 1923—many versions promoted as modern in speech were produced, including those carrying the names of Moffatt, Weymouth and Goodspeed.

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Another cluster of modern speech Bibles was released at mid-century—1958 to 1968—which included the Amplified, Good News, New English and Living Bible, as well as New Testaments from Phillips, Wuest and Kingsley.

While our Christian heritage has been richly blessed by great versions of the past, **The WORD, New Century Version**, clearly translates God's inerrant Word for our times.

A Bible you can trust

The **New Century Version** was translated by the World Bible Translation Center, an independent, non-profit organization that developed the text for the best-selling **International Children's Version, New Testament** (Sweet, 1983).

A translation review process has been designed to insure that the **New Century Version** avoids denominational bias and loose paraphrasing. It includes a cross-section of trustworthy New Testament Greek scholars:

Virtus E. Gideon, Ph.D.

Southwestern Baptist Seminary

Harold W. Hoehner, Ph.D.

Dallas Theological Seminary

Stanley M. Horton, Th.D.

Assemblies of God Graduate School

Neil R. Lightfoot, Ph.D.

Abilene Christian University

Respecting the inerrant Word

Guided always by the necessity of accuracy, the translators have worked toward a version that communicates the original Greek as clearly and precisely to modern readers as it was communicated to first century readers.

There is no intent to provide a commentary on the Bible or to promote any one man's interpretation, as is often the case with paraphrases.

This work is based on the affirmation that all scripture is inspired and inerrant in the original autographs. The translators further proclaim that God's Word, as we have it today, is our complete and authoritative guide to His will.



Sweet Publishing

Fort Worth, Texas 76118

Introducing **The WORD**— The alternative to the paraphrase.

The **New Century Version**, translated directly from the Greek, is not a paraphrase. It's an alternative that accurately states the meaning of scripture in crystal clear English.

*"I like the **New Century Version** very much. We are inclined to think people will 'automatically' understand scripture. But that's not true. I believe this version is accurate, to the point, clear and lucid."*

Luci Swindoll
Fullerton, CA

*"The **New Century Version** is a needed translation. It is contemporary and very readable, yet faithful to the Greek text. I will recommend it widely."*

Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie
Hollywood, CA

*"Excellent! I prefer **The WORD** over a paraphrase like the Living Bible."*

Dr. Paul Faulkner
Marriage Enrichment Films

"... an excellent idea. I am of the opinion that it will make a genuine contribution to the church."

Virtus E. Gideon, Ph.D.
Southwestern Baptist Seminary

"It simplifies the text, but does not patronize the reader. This is a brilliant achievement."

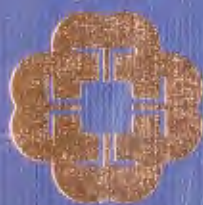
William C. Williams, Ph.D.
Translator, NIV and NAS

*"**The WORD** is so straightforward that the reality of what Jesus has done moved me to cry. It's much easier to understand; one never feels anything has been left out or glossed over."*

Amy Grant
Christian Music Artist

The WORD

New Century Version



NEW TESTAMENT

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WORD**

New Century Version

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The WORD

New Century Version

New Testament

Sweet Publishing
Fort Worth, Texas

The Word
New Century Version, New Testament
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Fort Worth, Texas 76118

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Preface

The *New Century Version* of the New Testament is the first phase of a major Bible translation project. It was begun in 1973 by the World Bible Translation Center and will be completed with the release of the Old Testament, scheduled for 1986.

An Alternative to the Paraphrase

The *New Century Version* was translated directly from the Greek text (United Bible Society's *Greek New Testament*, 3rd edition). The *New Century Version* is not a paraphrase. As an alternative to paraphrasing, it accurately states the meaning of Scripture in language that can be clearly understood, even into the next century. It can be used for personal devotional reading and group study, and yet it still has the dignity necessary for public reading.

The liberties taken in translation by popular paraphrased Bibles cause many to seek an alternate version. An accurate new translation is needed that avoids the dangers of loose paraphrasing but still makes the Bible clear and insightful. The *New Century Version* is a trustworthy alternative that clearly takes God at His Word.

A Version for Our Times

A quick review of the history of English Bible translations reveals a healthy cycle of new versions. William Tyndale's translation, which ultimately led to the Authorized Version of 1611, stimulated 38 new translations and editions within 30 years of his death in 1536. During the turn of the century—1890 to 1923—many versions promoted as modern in speech were produced, including those carrying the names of Moffatt, Weymouth, and Goodspeed. Yet, few readers to-

day would accept seventy-year-old translations as *modern*.

Another cluster of modern speech Bibles was released at mid-century—1958 to 1968—which included the Amplified, Good News, New English, and Living Bible, as well as New Testaments by Phillips, Wuest, and Kingsley.

Each generation must produce fresh, new translations that communicate God's inerrant Word more clearly for its time. While our Christian heritage has been richly blessed by great versions of the past, we would be the poorer if new translations were not available to confront us afresh with divine truth.

The WORD, New Century Version, is clearly translated for our times.

The Translation Process

The World Bible Translation Center is an independent, non-profit organization whose goal is to produce easy-to-understand versions for people around the world. They developed the base text for the well received *International Children's Version* (Sweet, 1983).

The intent of WBTC in the *New Century Version* is to state koiné Greek in English as clearly and precisely as possible. The result of eleven years of their labor and the final editorial work supervised by the publisher has been reviewed by trustworthy Greek scholars from various religious backgrounds.

The review process was designed to insure that the *New Century Version* avoided denominational bias and loose paraphrasing. To assure dignified, understandable English sentence construction and word choice, recognized stylists and proofers were used to refine the English text.

Making God's Word Clear

Paragraph forms and large print have been used to make the text more readable. For clarity, some verses and sentences have been carefully joined. And poetry has been set in classic poetic forms to retain beauty and readability.

The *New Century Version* uses less complex words and phrases in place of more traditional words. For example, "repentance" has become "change of heart and life;" "disciple" is replaced with "follower;" "covenant" becomes "agreement;" "justify" is changed to "make right;" "genealogy" becomes "family history;" "antichrist" is changed to "enemy of Christ;" and "scribes" becomes "teachers of the law."

Footnotes in *The WORD* will be valuable in several ways. First, when there are various renderings of a single passage in early Greek manuscripts, the most accepted wording has been used in the text. The alternate wording is identified in a footnote by the phrase "Some Greek copies say."

When a traditional wording in a passage may be obscure to modern readers, a clearer word or phrase is used in the text. The older wording is given in a footnote after "Or" For example, in Acts 11:2, the somewhat obscure expression "those of the circumcision" is in the footnote. The *New Century Version* text uses the less abstract reading, "Jewish believers."

Respect for the Inerrant Word

Guided always by the necessity of accuracy, the translators have worked toward a translation that communicates the same thing to modern readers that koiné Greek communicated to its first century readers. There is no intent to provide commentary on the Bible, as is the case with some paraphrases.

The *New Century Version* is based on the affirmation that all Scripture is inspired and inerrant in the original autographs. The translators further proclaim that God's Word, as we have it today, is our complete and authoritative guide to His will.

We prayerfully and soberly present the *New Century Version*, acknowledging the ultimate authority to be God, whose Holy Spirit is at work in *The WORD*.

The Publisher

New Testament

1891

Matthew

The Family History of Jesus

1 This is the family history of Jesus Christ. He came from the family of David. David came from the family of Abraham.

²Abraham was the father of Isaac.

Isaac was the father of Jacob.

Jacob was the father of Judah and his brothers.

³Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah.

(Their mother was Tamar.)

Perez was the father of Hezron.

Hezron was the father of Ram.

⁴Ram was the father of Amminadab.

Amminadab was the father of Nahshon.

Nahshon was the father of Salmon.

⁵Salmon was the father of Boaz.

(Boaz' mother was Rahab.)

Boaz was the father of Obed.

(Obed's mother was Ruth.)

Obed was the father of Jesse.

⁶Jesse was the father of King David.

David was the father of Solomon.

(Solomon's mother had been Uriah's wife.)

⁷Solomon was the father of Rehoboam.

Rehoboam was the father of Abijah.

Abijah was the father of Asa.

⁸Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat.

Jehoshaphat was the father of Joram.

Joram was the father of Uzziah.

⁹Uzziah was the father of Jotham.

Jotham was the father of Ahaz.

Ahaz was the father of Hezekiah.

¹⁰Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh.

Manasseh was the father of Amon.

Amon was the father of Josiah.

¹¹Josiah was the father of Jechoniah and his brothers.

(This was at the time that the people
were taken to Babylon.)

¹²After they were taken to Babylon:

Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel.

Shealtiel was the father of Zerubbabel.

¹³Zerubbabel was the father of Abiud.

Abiud was the father of Eliakim.

Eliakim was the father of Azor.

¹⁴Azor was the father of Zadok.

Zadok was the father of Achim.

Achim was the father of Eliud.

¹⁵Eliud was the father of Eleazar.

Eleazar was the father of Matthan.

Matthan was the father of Jacob.

¹⁶Jacob was the father of Joseph.

Joseph was the husband of Mary,

and Mary was the mother of Jesus.

Jesus is called the Christ.^a

¹⁷So there were 14 generations from Abraham to David. And there were 14 generations from David until the time when the people were taken to Babylon. And there were 14 generations from the time when the people were taken to Babylon until Christ was born.

The Birth of Jesus Christ

¹⁸The mother of Jesus Christ was Mary. And this is how the birth of Jesus came about. Mary was engaged to marry Joseph. But before they married, she learned that she was going to have a baby. She was pregnant by the power of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁹Mary's husband, Joseph, was a good man. He did not want to disgrace her in public, so he planned to divorce her secretly.

^{16a} Or *Messiah*; also in verses 17 and 18.

²⁰While Joseph thought about this, an angel of the Lord came to him in a dream. The angel said, "Joseph, son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife. The baby in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. Give him that name because he will save his people from their sins."

²²All this happened to make clear the full meaning of what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³"The virgin will be pregnant and will give birth to a son. They will name him Immanuel."^a (Immanuel means, "God with us.")

²⁴When Joseph woke up, he did what the Lord's angel had told him to do. Joseph married Mary. ²⁵But he had no sexual union with her until she gave birth to the son. And Joseph named the son Jesus.

Wise Men Come to Worship Jesus

2 Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in Judea during the time when Herod was king. After Jesus was born, some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem. ²They asked, "Where is the baby who was born to be the King of the Jews? We saw his star in the east, and we came to worship him."

³When King Herod heard about this new king of the Jews, he was troubled. And all the people in Jerusalem were worried too. ⁴Herod called a meeting of all the leading priests and teachers of the law. He asked them where the Christ^b would be born. ⁵They answered, "In the town of Bethlehem in Judea. It has been written through the prophet:

⁶'Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
you are important among the rulers of Judah.

A ruler will come from you,

and that ruler will lead Israel, my people.'"

Micah 5:2

⁷Then Herod had a secret meeting with the wise men from the east. He learned from them the exact time they first saw the star. ⁸Then Herod sent the wise men to Bethlehem. He said to them, "Go and look carefully to find the child. When you find him, come tell me so I can go worship him too."

⁹They heard the king and then left. They saw the same star they had seen in the east. It went before them until it stopped

^{23a} Isaiah 7:14. ^{4b} Or *Messiah*.

above the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw the star, they were filled with joy. ¹¹They went to the house where the child was and saw him with his mother, Mary. They bowed down and worshiped the child. They opened their gifts and gave him treasures of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²But God warned them in a dream not to go back to Herod. So they went home to their own country by a different way.

Jesus' Parents Take Him to Egypt

¹³After the wise men left, an angel of the Lord came to Joseph in a dream. The angel said, "Get up! Take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Herod will start looking for the child to kill him. Stay in Egypt until I tell you to return."

¹⁴So Joseph got up and left for Egypt during the night with the child and his mother. ¹⁵Joseph stayed in Egypt until Herod died. This was to make clear the full meaning of what the Lord had said through the prophet, "I called my son to come out of Egypt."^a

Herod Kills the Baby Boys in Bethlehem

¹⁶When Herod saw that the wise men had tricked him, he was very angry. So he gave an order to kill all the baby boys in Bethlehem and in all the area around Bethlehem who were two years old or younger. This was in keeping with the time he learned from the wise men. ¹⁷So what God had said through the prophet Jeremiah came true:

¹⁸"A sound was heard in Ramah.

It was bitter crying and much sadness.

Rachel cries for her children,

and she cannot be comforted,

because her children are dead."

Jeremiah 31:15

Joseph and Mary Return from Egypt with Jesus

¹⁹After Herod died, an angel of the Lord came to Joseph in a dream while he was in Egypt. ²⁰The angel said, "Get up! Take the child and his mother and go to Israel. The people who were trying to kill the child are now dead."

²¹So Joseph took the child and his mother and went to Israel.

^{15a} Hosea 11:1.

²²But he heard that Archelaus was now king in Judea. Archelaus became king when his father Herod died. So Joseph was afraid to go there. After being warned in a dream, he went to the area of Galilee. ²³He went to a town called Nazareth and lived there. And so what God had said through the prophets came true: "He [Jesus] will be called a Nazarene."

The Work of John the Baptist

3 About that time John the Baptist came and began preaching in the desert area of Judea. ²John said, "Change your hearts and lives because the kingdom of heaven is coming soon." ³John was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah:

"There is a person shouting in the desert:

'Prepare the way for the Lord;
make his paths straight.'"

Isaiah 40:3

⁴John's clothes were made from camel's hair. He wore a leather belt around his waist. For food, he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁵Many people came from Jerusalem and all Judea and all the area around the Jordan River to hear John preach. ⁶They told of the sins they had done, and John baptized them in the Jordan River.

⁷Many of the Pharisees and Sadducees came to the place where John was baptizing people. When John saw them, he said: "You are all snakes! Who warned you to run away from God's anger that is coming?" ⁸You must do the things that show that you have really changed your hearts and lives. ⁹And don't think that you can boast and say to yourselves, 'Abraham is our father.' I tell you that God could make children for Abraham from these rocks. ¹⁰The ax is now ready to cut down the trees. Every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹"I baptize you with water to show that your hearts and lives have changed. But there is one coming later who is greater than I am. I am not good enough to carry his shoes. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. ¹²He will come ready to work in the grain. He will put the good part of the grain into his barn. And he will burn the part that is not good with a fire that cannot be put out."

Jesus Is Baptized by John

¹³At that time Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. ¹⁴But John tried to stop him. John said, "Why do you come to me to be baptized? I should be baptized by you!"

¹⁵Jesus answered, "Let it be this way for now. We should do all things that are right." So John agreed to baptize Jesus.

¹⁶Jesus was baptized and came up out of the water. Then heaven opened, and he saw God's Spirit coming down on him like a dove. ¹⁷A voice spoke from heaven, saying, "This is my Son and I love him. I am very pleased with him."

The Temptation of Jesus

4 Then the Spirit led Jesus into the desert to be tempted by the devil. ²He fasted for 40 days and nights. After this, he was very hungry. ³The devil came to Jesus to tempt him. The devil said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these rocks to become bread."

⁴Jesus answered, "It is written,

'A person does not live only by eating food.

True life comes from the words that God speaks.'"

Deuteronomy 8:3

⁵Then the devil led Jesus to the holy city [Jerusalem] and put him on a very high place of the temple. ⁶The devil said, "If you are the Son of God, jump off. Because it is written,

'God will command his angels for you,

and their hands will catch you,

so that you will not hurt your foot on a rock.'" *Psalms 91:11-12*

⁷Jesus answered him, "It also says,

'You must not tempt the Lord your God.'" *Deuteronomy 6:16*

⁸Then the devil led Jesus to the top of a very high mountain. He showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and all the great things that are in those kingdoms. ⁹The devil said, "If you will bow down and worship me, I will give you all these things."

¹⁰Jesus said to the devil, "Go away from me, Satan! It is written,

'You must worship the Lord your God.

Serve only him!'"

Deuteronomy 6:13

¹¹So the devil left Jesus. Then some angels came to Jesus and helped him.

Jesus Begins His Work in Galilee

¹²Jesus heard that John had been put in prison. So Jesus went back to Galilee. ¹³He left Nazareth and went and lived in Capernaum, a town near Lake Galilee. Capernaum is in the area near Zebulun and Naphtali. ¹⁴Jesus did this to make true what was said through the prophet Isaiah:

¹⁵“The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,
the way to the sea, past the Jordan River,
Galilee, where the non-Jewish people live—

¹⁶those people live in darkness,
but they have seen a great light;
the light has come for those people
who live in the land that is dark as a grave.” Isaiah 9:1-2

Jesus Chooses Some Followers

¹⁷From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Change your hearts and lives, because the kingdom of heaven is coming soon.”

¹⁸Jesus was walking by Lake Galilee. He saw two brothers, Simon (called Peter) and Simon’s brother Andrew. The brothers were fishermen and they were fishing in the lake with a net. ¹⁹Jesus said, “Come follow me. I will make you fishermen for men.” ²⁰At once Simon and Andrew left their nets and followed him.

²¹Jesus continued walking by Lake Galilee. He saw two other brothers, James and John, in a boat with their father Zebedee. They were preparing their nets to catch fish. Jesus told them to come with him. ²²So the brothers left the boat and their father, and they followed Jesus.

Jesus Teaches and Heals People

²³Jesus went everywhere in the country of Galilee. He taught in the synagogues and preached the Good News about the kingdom of heaven. And he healed all the people’s diseases and sicknesses. ²⁴The news about Jesus spread all over Syria,

and people brought all the sick to him. The sick people were suffering from different kinds of diseases and pain. Some were suffering very great pain, some had demons, some were epileptics, and some were paralyzed. Jesus healed all of them. ²⁵Large crowds from Galilee, the Ten Towns,⁴ Jerusalem, Judea, and the land across the Jordan River followed him.

Jesus Teaches the People

5 Jesus saw the crowds who were there. He went up on a hill and sat down. His followers came to him, ²and he taught the people, saying:

³“Those who know they have
great spiritual needs are blessed.

The kingdom of heaven belongs to them.

⁴Those who are sad now are blessed.

God will comfort them.

⁵Those who are humble are blessed.

The earth will belong to them.

⁶Those who want to do right
more than anything else are blessed.

God will fully satisfy them.

⁷Those who give mercy to others are blessed.

Mercy will be given to them.

⁸Those who are pure in their thinking are blessed.

They will be with God.

⁹Those who work to bring peace are blessed.

God will call them his sons.

¹⁰Those who are persecuted
for doing good are blessed.

The kingdom of heaven belongs to them.

¹¹“People will say bad things about you and persecute you. They will lie and say all kinds of evil things about you because you follow me. But when they do those things to you, you are blessed. ¹²Rejoice and be glad. You have a great reward waiting for you in heaven. In the same way people persecuted the prophets who lived before you.”

^{25a} Greek, *Decapolis*.

You Are like Salt and like Light

¹³“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its salty taste, it cannot be made salty again. It is good for nothing. It must be thrown out for people to walk on.

¹⁴“You are the light that gives light to the world. A city that is built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵And people don’t hide a light under a bowl. They put the light on a lampstand. Then the light shines for everyone in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, you should be a light for other people. Live so that they will see the good deeds you do. Live so that they will praise your Father in heaven.”

Jesus and the Writings of the Old Testament

¹⁷“Don’t think that I have come to destroy the law of Moses or the teaching of the prophets. I have not come to destroy but to do what they said. ¹⁸I tell you the truth. Nothing will disappear from the law until heaven and earth are gone. The law will not lose even the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter until all has happened. ¹⁹Whoever refuses to obey any commandment, and teaches other people not to obey that commandment, will be the least important in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever obeys the law and teaches others to obey the law will be great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰I tell you that you must do better than the teachers of the law and the Pharisees. If you are not better than they are, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Jesus Teaches About Anger

²¹“You have heard that it was said to our people long ago, ‘Don’t murder anyone.’ Anyone who murders another will be judged.’ ²²But I tell you, if you are angry with your brother, you will be judged. And if you say bad things to your brother, you will be judged by the Jewish council. And if you call your brother a fool, then you will be in danger of the fire of hell.

²³“So when you offer your gift to God at the altar, and you remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there at the altar. Go and make peace with him. Then come and offer your gift.

^{21a} Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17.

²⁵“If your enemy is taking you to court, settle things with him quickly. You should do this before you go to court. If you don’t, he might turn you over to the judge. And the judge might give you to a guard to put you in jail. ²⁶I tell you that you will not leave the jail until you have paid everything you owe.”

Jesus Teaches About Sexual Sin

²⁷“You have heard that it was said, ‘Don’t be guilty of the sin of adultery.’^a ²⁸But I tell you that if anyone looks at a woman and wants to sin sexually with her, then he has already done that sin with the woman in his mind. ²⁹If your right eye causes you to sin, then take it out and throw it away. It is better to lose one part of your body than to have your whole body thrown into hell. ³⁰If your right hand causes you to sin, then cut it off and throw it away. It is better to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.”

Jesus Teaches About Divorce

³¹“It was also said, ‘Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a written notice of divorce.’^b ³²But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife is causing his wife to be guilty of adultery. The only reason for a man to divorce his wife is if she has sexual relations with another man. And anyone who marries that divorced woman is guilty of adultery.”

Jesus Teaches About Making Promises

³³“You have heard that it was said to our people long ago, ‘When you make a vow don’t break your vow. Keep the vows that you make to the Lord.’^c ³⁴But I tell you, never make a vow. Don’t make a vow using the name of heaven, because heaven is God’s throne. ³⁵Don’t make a vow using the name of the earth, because the earth belongs to God. Don’t make a vow using the name of Jerusalem, because that is the city of the great King. ³⁶And don’t make a vow by your own head because you cannot make one hair on your head become white or black. ³⁷Say only ‘yes’ if you mean yes, and say only ‘no’ if you mean no. If you must say more than ‘yes’ or ‘no,’ it is from the Evil One.”

^{27a} Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18. ^{31b} Deuteronomy 24:1. ^{33c} Leviticus 19:12; Numbers 30:2; Deuteronomy 23:21.

Jesus Teaches About Fighting Back

³⁸“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’^a ³⁹But I tell you, don’t stand up against an evil person. If someone slaps you on the right cheek, turn and let him slap the other cheek too. ⁴⁰If someone wants to sue you in court and take your shirt, let him have your coat too. ⁴¹If a soldier forces you to go with him one mile, go with him two miles. ⁴²If someone asks you for something, give it to him. Don’t refuse to give to someone who wants to borrow from you.”

Love All People

⁴³“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbors^b and hate your enemies.’ ⁴⁴But I tell you, love your enemies. Pray for those who persecute you. ⁴⁵If you do this, you will be sons of your Father in heaven. Your Father causes the sun to rise on good people and on bad people. Your Father sends rain to those who do good and to those who do wrong. ⁴⁶If you love only those who love you, you will get no reward. Even the tax collectors do that. ⁴⁷And if you are nice only to your friends, you are no better than other people. Even people without God are nice to their friends. ⁴⁸So you must be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.”

Jesus Teaches About Giving to Other People

6 “Be careful! When you do good things, don’t do them in front of people to be seen by them. If you do that, then you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

²“When you give to the poor, don’t blow trumpets as the hypocrites do. They do that in the synagogues and on the streets so that other people will honor them. I tell you the truth. Those hypocrites already have their full reward. ³So when you give to the poor, give very secretly. Don’t let anyone know what you are doing. ⁴Your giving should be done in secret. Your Father can see what is done in secret, and he will reward you.”

Jesus Teaches About Prayer

⁵“When you pray, don’t be like the hypocrites. They love to stand in the synagogues and on the street corners and pray.

^{38a} Exodus 21:24; Leviticus 24:20; Deuteronomy 19:21. ^{43b} Leviticus 19:18.

They want people to see them pray. I tell you the truth. They already have their full reward. ⁶When you pray, you should go into your room and close the door. Then pray to your Father who cannot be seen. Your Father can see what is done in secret, and he will reward you.

⁷"And when you pray, don't be like people who don't know God. They continue saying things that mean nothing. They think that God will hear them because of the many things they say. ⁸Don't be like them. Your Father knows what you need before you ask him. ⁹So when you pray, you should pray like this:

'Our Father in heaven,

we pray that your name will always be kept holy.

¹⁰We pray that your kingdom will come,

and that the things you want will be done,
here on earth and also in heaven.

¹¹Give us the food we need for each day.

¹²Forgive the sins we have done,
just as we have forgiven those
who did wrong to us.

¹³Do not cause us to be tested;
but save us from the Evil One.'

¹⁴Yes, if you forgive others for the things they do wrong, then your Father in heaven will also forgive you for the things you do wrong. ¹⁵But if you don't forgive the wrongs of others, then your Father in heaven will not forgive the wrong things you do."

Jesus Teaches About Fasting

¹⁶"When you fast, don't put on a sad face as the hypocrites do. They make their faces look strange to show others that they are fasting. I tell you the truth, those hypocrites already have their full reward. ¹⁷So when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face. ¹⁸Then people will not know that you are fasting. But your Father, whom you cannot see, will see you. Your Father sees what is done in secret, and he will reward you."

God Is More Important Than Money

¹⁹"Don't store treasures for yourselves here on earth. Moths and rust will destroy treasures here on earth. And thieves can

break into your house and steal the things you have. ²⁰So store your treasure in heaven. The treasures in heaven cannot be destroyed by moths or rust. And thieves cannot break in and steal that treasure. ²¹Your heart will be where your treasure is.

²²"The eye is a light for the body. If your eyes are good, then your whole body will be full of light. ²³But if your eyes are evil, then your whole body will be full of darkness. And if the only light you have is really darkness, then you have the worst darkness.

²⁴"No one can be a slave to two masters. He will hate one master and love the other. Or he will follow one master and refuse to follow the other. So you cannot serve God and money."

Don't Worry

²⁵"So I tell you, don't worry about the food you need to live. And don't worry about the clothes you need for your body. Life is more important than food, and the body is more important than clothes. ²⁶Look at the birds in the air. They don't plant or harvest or store food in barns, but your heavenly Father feeds them. And you know that you are worth much more than the birds. ²⁷You cannot add any time to your life by worrying about it.

²⁸"And why do you worry about clothes? Look at the flowers in the field. See how they grow. They don't work or make clothes for themselves. ²⁹But I tell you that even Solomon, with his riches, was not dressed as beautifully as one of these flowers. ³⁰God clothes the grass in the field like that. The grass is living today, but tomorrow it is thrown into the fire to be burned. So you can be even more sure that God will clothe you. Don't have so little faith! ³¹Don't worry and say, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' ³²The people who don't know God keep trying to get these things. Your Father in heaven knows that you need them. ³³The thing you should want most is God's kingdom and doing what God wants. Then all these other things you need will be given to you. ³⁴So don't worry about tomorrow. Each day has enough trouble of its own. Tomorrow will have its own worries."

Jesus Teaches About Judging Other People

7 “Don’t judge other people, and you will not be judged. ²You will be judged in the same way that you judge others. And the forgiveness you give to others will be given to you.

³“Why do you notice the little piece of dust that is in your brother’s eye, but you don’t notice the big piece of wood that is in your own eye? ⁴Why do you say to your brother, ‘Let me take that little piece of dust out of your eye’? Look at yourself first! You still have that big piece of wood in your own eye. ⁵You are a hypocrite! First, take the wood out of your own eye. Then you will see clearly enough to take the dust out of your brother’s eye.

⁶“Don’t give holy things to dogs. Don’t throw your pearls before pigs. Pigs will only trample on them, and the dogs will only turn to attack you.”

Continue to Ask God for the Things You Need

⁷“Continue to ask, and God will give to you. Continue to search, and you will find. Continue to knock, and the door will open for you. ⁸Yes, everyone who continues asking will receive. He who continues seeking will find. And he who continues knocking will have the door opened for him.

⁹“Do any of you have a son? If your son asks for bread, would you give him a stone? No! ¹⁰Or if your son asks for a fish, would you give him a snake? No! ¹¹Even though you are bad, you know how to give good gifts to your children. So surely your heavenly Father will give good things to those who ask him.”

The Most Important Rule

¹²“Do for other people the same things you want them to do for you. This is the meaning of the law of Moses and the teaching of the prophets.”

The Way to Heaven and the Way to Hell

¹³“Enter through the narrow gate. The road that leads to hell is a very easy road, and the gate to hell is very wide. Many people enter through that gate. ¹⁴But the gate that opens the way to life is very narrow. And the road to life is very hard. Only a few people find that road.”

The Things People Do Show the Kind of People They Are

¹⁵“Be careful of false prophets. They come to you and look gentle like sheep. But they are really dangerous like wolves. ¹⁶You will know these people because of the things they do. Grapes don’t come from thorn bushes, and figs don’t come from thorny weeds. ¹⁷In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit. And bad trees produce bad fruit. ¹⁸A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot produce good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that does not produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰You will know these people by what they produce.

²¹“Not everyone who says that I am his Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven. The only people who will enter the kingdom of heaven are those who do what my Father in heaven wants. ²²On the last day many people will say to me, ‘You are our Lord! We spoke for you. And through you we forced out demons and did many miracles.’ ²³Then I will tell them clearly, ‘Go away from me, you who do wrong. I never knew you.’”

A Wise Person and a Foolish Person

²⁴“Everyone who hears these things I say and obeys them is like a wise man. The wise man built his house on rock. ²⁵It rained hard and the water rose. The winds blew and hit that house. But the house did not fall, because the house was built on rock. ²⁶But everyone who hears the things I teach and does not obey them is like a foolish man. The foolish man built his house on sand. ²⁷It rained hard, the water rose, and the winds blew and hit that house. And the house fell with a big crash.”

²⁸When Jesus finished saying these things, the people were amazed at his teaching. ²⁹Jesus did not teach like their teachers of the law. He taught like a person who had authority.

Jesus Heals a Sick Man

8 When Jesus came down from the hill, great crowds followed him. ²Then a man sick with leprosy came to Jesus. The man bowed down before him and said, “Lord, you have the power to heal me if you want.”

³Jesus touched the man and said, “I want to heal you. Be healed!” And immediately the man was healed from his lep-

rosy. ⁴Then Jesus said to him, "Don't tell anyone about what happened. But go and show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded."^a This will show people that you are healed."

Jesus Heals a Soldier's Servant

⁵Jesus went to the city of Capernaum. When he entered the city, an army officer came to Jesus and begged for help. ⁶The officer said, "Lord, my servant is at home in bed. He can't move his body and is in much pain."

⁷Jesus said to the officer, "I will go and heal him."

⁸The officer answered, "Lord, I am not good enough for you to come into my house. All you need to do is command that my servant be healed, and he will be healed. ⁹I myself am a man under the authority of other men. And I have soldiers under my authority. I tell one soldier, 'Go,' and he goes. I tell another soldier, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and my servant obeys me.

¹⁰When Jesus heard this, he was amazed. He said to those who were with him, "I tell you the truth. This man has more faith than any other person I have found, even in Israel. ¹¹Many people will come from the east and from the west. They will sit and eat with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. ¹²And those people who should have the kingdom will be thrown outside into the darkness. In that place people will cry and grind their teeth."

¹³Then Jesus said to the officer, "Go home. Your servant will be healed just as you believed he would." And at that same time his servant was healed.

Jesus Heals Many People

¹⁴Jesus went to Peter's house. There Jesus saw that Peter's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever. ¹⁵Jesus touched her hand and the fever left her. Then she stood up and began to serve Jesus.

¹⁶That evening people brought to Jesus many who had demons. Jesus spoke and the demons left them. Jesus healed all the sick. ¹⁷He did these things to make come true what had

^{4a} See Leviticus 14:1–32.

been said through Isaiah the prophet:

“He took away our diseases
and carried away our sicknesses.”

Isaiah 53:4

People Want to Follow Jesus

¹⁸When Jesus saw the crowd around him, he told his disciples to go to the other side of the lake. ¹⁹Then a teacher of the law came to Jesus and said, “Teacher, I will follow you any place you go.”

²⁰Jesus said to him, “The foxes have holes and the birds have nests. But the Son of Man has no place where he can rest his head.”

²¹Another man, one of Jesus’ followers, said to Jesus, “Lord, let me go and bury my father first.”

²²But Jesus said to him, “Follow me, and let the people who are dead bury their own dead.”

Jesus Stops a Storm

²³Jesus got into a boat and his followers went with him. ²⁴A very bad storm arose on the lake, so that the waves covered the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. ²⁵The followers went to Jesus and woke him. They said, “Lord, save us! We will drown!”

²⁶Jesus answered, “Why are you afraid? You don’t have enough faith.” Then Jesus got up and gave a command to the wind and the sea. The wind stopped, and the sea became very calm.

²⁷The men were amazed. They said, “What kind of man is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him!”

Jesus Heals Two Men Troubled with Demons

²⁸Jesus arrived at the other side of the lake in the country of the Gadarene people. There, two men came to Jesus who had demons in them. These men lived in the burial caves. They were so dangerous that people could not use the road by those caves. ²⁹The two men came to Jesus and shouted, “What do you want with us, Son of God? Did you come here to punish us before the right time?”

³⁰Near that place there was a large herd of pigs feeding. ³¹The demons begged Jesus, “If you make us leave these men, please send us into that herd of pigs.”

³²Jesus said to them, "Go!" So the demons left the men and went into the pigs. Then the whole herd of pigs ran down the hill into the lake and were drowned. ³³The men who were caring for the pigs ran away and went into town. They told about all of this and what had happened to the men who had demons. ³⁴Then the whole town went out to see Jesus. When they saw him, they begged him to leave their area.

Jesus Heals a Paralyzed Man

9 Jesus got into a boat and went back across the lake to his own town. ²Some people brought to Jesus a man who was paralyzed. The man was lying on his mat. Jesus saw that these people had great faith, so he said to the paralyzed man, "Be happy, young man. Your sins are forgiven."

³Some of the teachers of the law heard this. They said to themselves, "This man speaks as if he were God—that is blasphemy!"

⁴Jesus knew what they were thinking. So he said, "Why are you thinking evil thoughts? ⁵Which is easier: to tell this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to tell him, 'Stand up and walk'? ⁶But I will prove to you that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins." Then Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "Stand up. Take your mat and go home." ⁷And the man stood up and went home. ⁸The people saw this and were amazed. They praised God for giving power like this to men.

Jesus Chooses Matthew

⁹When Jesus was leaving, he saw a man named Matthew sitting in the tax office. Jesus said to him, "Follow me." And Matthew stood up and followed Jesus.

¹⁰Jesus had dinner at Matthew's house. Many tax collectors and "sinners" came and ate with Jesus and his followers. ¹¹The Pharisees saw this and asked Jesus' followers, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?"

¹²Jesus heard the Pharisees ask this. So he said, "Healthy people don't need a doctor. Only the sick need a doctor. ¹³Go and learn what this means: 'I don't want animal sacrifices. I want kindness.'"^a I did not come to invite good people. I came to invite sinners."

^{13a} Hosea 6:6.

Jesus Is Not Like Other Religious Jews

¹⁴Then the followers of John came to Jesus. They said to Jesus, "We and the Pharisees often fast, but your followers don't fast. Why?"

¹⁵Jesus answered, "The friends of the bridegroom are not sad while he is with them. But the time will come when the bridegroom will leave them. Then his friends will fast.

¹⁶"When someone sews a patch over a hole in an old coat, he never uses a piece of cloth that is not yet shrunk. If he does, the patch will shrink and pull away from the coat. Then the hole will be worse. ¹⁷Also, people never pour new wine into old wine bags. If they do, the old bags will break. The wine will spill, and the wine bags will be ruined. But people always pour new wine into new wine bags. Then the wine and the wine bags will continue to be good."

Jesus Gives Life to a Dead Girl and Heals a Sick Woman

¹⁸While Jesus was saying these things, a ruler of the synagogue came to him. The ruler bowed down before Jesus and said, "My daughter has just died. But come and touch her with your hand, and she will live again."

¹⁹So Jesus stood up and went with the ruler. Jesus' followers went too.

²⁰Then a woman who had been bleeding for 12 years came behind Jesus and touched the edge of his coat. ²¹She was thinking, "If I can touch his coat, then I will be healed."

²²Jesus turned and saw the woman. He said, "Be happy, dear woman. You are made well because you believed." And the woman was healed from that moment.

²³Jesus went into the ruler's house. Jesus saw people there who play music for funerals, and he saw the noisy crowd.

²⁴Jesus said, "Go away. The girl is not dead. She is only asleep." But the people laughed at Jesus. ²⁵After the crowd had been put outside, Jesus went into the girl's room. He took her hand, and she stood up. ²⁶The news about this spread all around the area.

Jesus Heals More People

²⁷When Jesus was leaving there, two blind men followed him. They cried out, "Show kindness to us, Son of David!"

²⁸Jesus went inside, and the blind men went with him. He asked the men, "Do you believe that I can make you see again?" They answered, "Yes, Lord."

²⁹Then Jesus touched their eyes and said, "You believe that I can make you see again, so this will happen." ³⁰Then the men were able to see. But Jesus warned them very strongly, saying, "Don't tell anyone about this." ³¹But the blind men left and spread the news about Jesus all around that area.

³²When the two men were leaving, some people brought another man to Jesus. This man could not talk because he had a demon in him. ³³Jesus forced the demon to leave the man. Then the man who couldn't talk was able to speak. The crowd was amazed and said, "We have never seen anything like this in Israel."

³⁴But the Pharisees said, "The leader of demons is the one that gives him power to force demons out."

Jesus Feels Sorry for the People

³⁵Jesus traveled through all the towns and villages. He taught in their synagogues and told people the Good News about the kingdom. And he healed all kinds of diseases and sicknesses. ³⁶He saw the crowds of people and felt sorry for them because they were worried and helpless. They were like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷Jesus said to his followers, "There are many people to harvest, but there are only a few workers to help harvest them. ³⁸God owns the harvest. Pray to him that he will send more workers to help gather his harvest."

Jesus Sends His Apostles to Tell About God's Kingdom

10 Jesus called his 12 followers together. He gave them power to drive out evil spirits and to heal every kind of disease and sickness. ²These are the names of the 12 apostles: Simon (also called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James, son of Zebedee, and his brother John; ³Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew, the tax collector; James, son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; ⁴Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot. Judas is the one who gave Jesus to his enemies.

⁵These 12 he sent out with the following order: "Don't go to the non-Jewish people. And don't go into any town where the

Samaritans live. ⁶But go to the people of Israel. They are like sheep that are lost. ⁷When you go, preach this: 'The kingdom of heaven is coming soon.' ⁸Heal the sick. Give dead people life again. Heal those who have leprosy. Force demons to leave people. I give you these powers freely. So help other people freely. ⁹Don't carry any money with you—gold or silver or copper. ¹⁰Don't carry a bag. Take for your trip only the clothes and shoes you are wearing. Don't take a walking stick. A worker should be given the things he needs.

¹¹"When you enter a city or town, find some worthy person there and stay in his home until you leave. ¹²When you enter that home say, 'Peace be with you.' ¹³If the people there welcome you, let your peace stay there. But if they don't welcome you, take back the peace you wished for them. ¹⁴And if a home or town refuses to welcome you or listen to you, then leave that place. Shake its dust off your feet. ¹⁵I tell you the truth. On the Judgment Day it will be worse for that town than for the towns of Sodom and Gomorrah."

Jesus Warns His Apostles About Troubles

¹⁶"Listen! I am sending you out, and you will be like sheep among wolves. So be as smart as snakes. But also be like doves and do nothing wrong. ¹⁷Be careful of people. They will arrest you and take you to court. They will whip you in their synagogues. ¹⁸Because of me you will be taken to stand before governors and kings. You will tell them and the non-Jewish people about me. ¹⁹When you are arrested, don't worry about what to say or how you should say it. At that time you will be given what to say. ²⁰It will not really be you speaking. The Spirit of your Father will be speaking through you.

²¹"Brothers will turn against their own brothers and give them over to be killed. Fathers will turn against their own children and give them to be killed. Children will fight against their own parents and have them killed. ²²All people will hate you because you follow me. But the person who continues strong until the end will be saved. ²³When you are persecuted in one city, go to another city. I tell you the truth. You will not finish going through all the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

²⁴"A student is not better than his teacher. A servant is not

better than his master. ²⁵A student should be satisfied to become like his teacher. A servant should be satisfied to become like his master. If the head of the family is called Beelzebul [the devil], then the other members of the family will be called worse names!"

Fear God, Not People

²⁶"So don't be afraid of those people. Everything that is hidden will be shown. Everything that is secret will be made known. ²⁷I tell you these things in the dark, but I want you to tell them in the light. I speak these things only to you, but you should tell them to everyone. ²⁸Don't be afraid of people. They can only kill the body. They cannot kill the soul. The only one you should fear is the One who can destroy the body and the soul in hell. ²⁹When birds are sold, two small birds cost only a penny. But not even one of the little birds can die without your Father's knowledge. ³⁰God even knows how many hairs are on your head. ³¹So don't be afraid. You are worth much more than many birds."

Telling People About Your Faith in Jesus

³²"If anyone stands before other people and says he believes in me, then I will say that he belongs to me. I will say this before my Father in heaven. ³³But if anyone stands before people and says he does not believe in me, then I will say that he does not belong to me. I will say this before my Father in heaven.

³⁴"Don't think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵I have come to make this happen:

A son will be against his father,
a daughter will be against her mother,
a daughter-in-law will be against her mother-in-law.

³⁶ A man's enemies will be members of his own family.'

Micah 7:6

³⁷"Whoever loves his father or mother more than he loves me is not worthy to be my follower. Whoever loves his son or daughter more than he loves me is not worthy to be my follower. ³⁸Whoever will not accept the cross that will be given to him when he follows me is not worthy of me. ³⁹Whoever loves

his life will lose it. Whoever gives up his life for me will find life. ⁴⁰Whoever accepts you also accepts me. And whoever accepts me also accepts the One who sent me. ⁴¹Whoever meets a prophet and accepts him will receive the reward of a prophet. And whoever accepts a good man because that man is good will receive the reward of a good man. ⁴²Whoever helps one of these little ones because they are my followers will truly get his reward. He will get his reward even if he only gave my follower a cup of cold water."

Jesus and John the Baptist

11 Jesus finished telling these things to his 12 followers. Then he left there and went to the towns in Galilee to teach and preach.

²John the Baptist was in prison, but he heard about the things Christ was doing. So John sent some of his followers to Jesus. ³They asked Jesus, "Are you the man who John said was coming, or should we wait for another one?"

⁴Jesus answered, "Go back to John and tell him about the things you hear and see: ⁵The blind can see again; the crippled can walk again; people who have leprosy are healed; the deaf can hear again; the dead are raised from death; and the Good News is told to the poor. ⁶The person who does not give up because of me is blessed."

⁷As John's followers were leaving, Jesus began talking to the people about John. Jesus said, "What did you go out to the desert to see? A reed blown by the wind? No. ⁸Really, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No. Those people who wear fine clothes live in kings' palaces. ⁹So what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, and I tell you, John is more than a prophet. ¹⁰This was written about John:

'Listen! I send my messenger ahead of you.

He will prepare the way for you.'

Malachi 3:1

¹¹I tell you the truth: John the Baptist is greater than any other man who has ever lived. But even the least important person in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John. ¹²Since the time John the Baptist came until now, the kingdom of heaven has been going forward in strength.^a People using force have been

^{12a} Or has suffered violence.

trying to take the kingdom. ¹³All the prophets and the law of Moses spoke until the time John came. They told about what would happen. ¹⁴And if you will believe the things the law and the prophets said, then you will believe that John is Elijah. The law and the prophets said he would come. ¹⁵You people who hear me, listen!

¹⁶“What can I say about the people who live today? What are they like? They are like children sitting in the marketplace. One group calls to the other,

¹⁷‘We played music for you, but you did not dance;
we sang a sad song, but you did not cry.’

¹⁸John came and he did not eat like others or drink wine. And people say, ‘He has a demon.’ ¹⁹The Son of Man came, eating and drinking wine, and people say, ‘Look at him! He eats too much, and drinks too much. He is a friend of tax collectors and “sinners.”’ But wisdom is proved to be right by the things it does.”

Jesus Warns People Who Don't Believe

²⁰Then Jesus criticized the cities where he did most of his miracles. He criticized them because the people there did not change their lives and stop sinning. ²¹Jesus said, “How terrible for you Chorazin! How terrible for you Bethsaida! I did many miracles in you. If those same miracles had happened in Tyre and Sidon, then the people there would have changed their lives a long time ago. They would have worn sackcloth and put ashes on themselves to show that they had changed. ²²But I tell you, on the day of judgment it will be worse for you than for Tyre and Sidon. ²³And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to heaven? No. You will be thrown down to the depths. I did many miracles in you. If those same miracles had happened in Sodom, it would still be a city today. ²⁴But I tell you it will be worse for you on the day of judgment than for Sodom.”

Jesus Offers Rest to People Who Accept Him

²⁵Then Jesus said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth. I praise you because you have hidden these things from the people who are wise and smart. But you have shown them

to those who are like little children. ²⁶Yes, Father, this is what you really wanted.

²⁷"My Father has given me all things. No one knows the Son—only the Father knows the Son. And no one knows the Father—only the Son knows the Father. And the only people who will know about the Father are those whom the Son chooses to tell.

²⁸"Come to me, all of you who are tired and have heavy burdens. I will give you rest. ²⁹Accept my work and learn from me. I am gentle and humble in spirit. And you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰The work that I ask you to accept is easy. The burden I give you to carry is not heavy."

Some Jews Criticize Jesus and His Followers

12 About that same time, Jesus was walking through some fields of grain on a Sabbath day. His followers were with him, and they were hungry. So they began to pick the grain and eat it. ²The Pharisees saw this, and they said to Jesus, "Look! Your followers are doing something that is against the law to do on the Sabbath day."

³Jesus answered, "Have you not read what David did when he and the people with him were hungry? ⁴David went into God's house, and he and those with him ate the bread that was offered to God. It was against the law for them to eat that bread. Only the priests were allowed to eat it. ⁵And have you not read in the law of Moses that on every Sabbath day the priests in the temple break this law about the Sabbath day? But the priests are not wrong for doing that. ⁶I tell you that there is something here that is greater than the temple. ⁷The Scripture says, 'I don't want animal sacrifices; I want kindness.'^a You don't really know what those words mean. If you understood them, you would not judge those who have done nothing wrong.

⁸"The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath day."

Jesus Heals a Man's Crippled Hand

⁹Jesus left there and went into their synagogue. ¹⁰In the syna-

^{7a} Hosea 6:6.

gogue, there was a man with a crippled hand. Some Jews there were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus of doing wrong. So they asked him, "Is it right to heal on the Sabbath day?"

¹¹Jesus answered, "If any of you has a sheep, and it falls into a ditch on the Sabbath day, then you will take the sheep and help it out of the ditch. ¹²Surely a man is more important than a sheep. So the law allows people to do good things on the Sabbath day."

¹³Then Jesus said to the man with the crippled hand, "Let me see your hand." The man put his hand out, and the hand became well again, the same as the other hand. ¹⁴But the Pharisees left and made plans to kill Jesus.

Jesus Does the Things God Chose Him to Do

¹⁵Jesus knew what the Pharisees were doing, so he left that place. Many people followed him, and he healed all who were sick. ¹⁶But Jesus warned the people not to tell who he was. ¹⁷He did these things to make come true what had been said through Isaiah the prophet:

¹⁸"Here is my servant; I [God] have chosen him.

I love him and I am pleased with him;

I will put my Spirit on him,

And he will tell how I will judge

all people fairly.

¹⁹He will not argue or shout;

people will not hear his voice in the streets.

²⁰He will not break the reed that is already bent;

he will not put out the light

that has almost stopped burning.

He will continue until he makes fair judgment

win the victory.

²¹ All people will find hope in him."

Isaiah 42:1-4

Jesus' Power Is from God

²²Then some people brought a man to Jesus. This man was blind and could not talk, because he had a demon. Jesus healed the man, and the man could talk and see. ²³All the people were amazed. They said, "Perhaps this man is the Son of David!"

²⁴The Pharisees heard the people saying this. The Pharisees said, "Jesus uses the power of Beelzebul [the devil] to force demons out of people. Beelzebul is the ruler of demons."

²⁵Jesus knew what the Pharisees were thinking. So he said to them, "Every kingdom that is fighting against itself will be destroyed. And every city that is divided will fall. And every family that is divided cannot succeed. ²⁶So if Satan forces out his own demons," then Satan is divided, and his kingdom will not continue. ²⁷You say that I use the power of Satan when I force out demons. If that is true, then what power do your people use when they force out demons? So your own people prove that you are wrong. ²⁸But if I use the power of God's Spirit to force out demons, this shows that the kingdom of God has come to you.

²⁹"If anyone wants to enter a strong man's house and steal his things, first he must tie up the strong man. Then he can steal the things from the strong man's house.

³⁰"If anyone is not with me, then he is against me. He who does not work with me is working against me. ³¹So I tell you, people can be forgiven for every sin they do. And people can be forgiven for every evil thing they say. But if anyone speaks evil things against the Holy Spirit, then he will not be forgiven. ³²Anyone who speaks against the Son of Man can be forgiven. But anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, now or in the future."

The Things You Do Show What You Are

³³"If you want good fruit, you must make the tree good. If your tree is not good, then it will have bad fruit. A tree is known by the kind of fruit it produces. ³⁴You snakes! You are evil people! How can you say anything good? The mouth speaks the things that are in the heart. ³⁵A good person has good things in his heart. And so he speaks the good things that come from his heart. But an evil person has evil in his heart. So he speaks the evil things that come from his heart. ³⁶And I tell you that people will have to give account for every careless thing they have said. This will happen on the day of judgment. ³⁷The words you have said will be used to judge you. Some of your

^{26a} Or if Satan forces out Satan.

words will prove you right, but some of your words will prove you guilty."

The Jewish Leaders Ask Jesus to Do a Miracle

³⁸Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law answered Jesus. They said, "Teacher, we want to see you work a miracle as a sign."

³⁹Jesus answered, "Evil and sinful people are the ones who want to see a miracle for a sign. But no sign will be given to them. The only sign will be what happened to the prophet Jonah. ⁴⁰Jonah was in the stomach of the big fish for three days and three nights. In the same way, the Son of Man will be in the grave three days and three nights. ⁴¹And on the Judgment Day the men from Nineveh will stand up with you people who live today, and they will show that you are guilty. Why? Because when Jonah preached to them, they were sorry and changed their lives. And I tell you that someone greater than Jonah is here! ⁴²On the Judgment Day, the Queen of the South will stand up with you people who live today, and she will show that you are guilty. Why? Because that queen traveled from far away to listen to Solomon's wise teaching. And I tell you that someone greater than Solomon is here!"

People Today Are Full of Evil

⁴³"When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it travels through dry places looking for a place to rest. But it finds no place to rest. ⁴⁴So the spirit says, 'I will go back to the home I left.' When the spirit comes back to the man, the spirit finds the home still empty. The home is swept clean and made neat. ⁴⁵Then the evil spirit goes out and brings seven other spirits even more evil than it is. Then all the spirits go into the man and live there. And that man has even more trouble than he had before. It is the same way with the evil people who live today."

Jesus' Followers Are His True Family

⁴⁶While Jesus was talking to the people, his mother and brothers stood outside. They wanted to talk to him. ⁴⁷Someone told Jesus, "Your mother and brothers are waiting for you outside. They want to talk to you."

⁴⁸He answered, "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?"
⁴⁹Then he pointed to his followers and said, "See! These people are my mother and my brothers. ⁵⁰My brothers and sisters and mother are those who do the things that my Father in heaven wants."

Jesus Tells a Story About a Farmer Planting Seed

13 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. ²Large crowds gathered around him. So Jesus got into a boat and sat, while the crowd stood on the shore. ³Then Jesus used stories to teach them many things. He said: "A farmer went out to plant his seed. ⁴While he was planting, some seed fell by the road. The birds came and ate all that seed. ⁵Some seed fell on rocky ground, where there wasn't enough dirt. That seed grew very fast, because the ground was not deep. ⁶But when the sun rose, the plants dried up because they did not have deep roots. ⁷Some other seed fell among thorny weeds. The weeds grew and choked the good plants. ⁸Some other seed fell on good ground where it grew and became grain. Some plants had 100 grains, other plants had 60 grains, and some had 30 grains. ⁹You people who hear me, listen!"

Why Jesus Used Stories to Teach

¹⁰The followers came to Jesus and asked, "Why do you use stories to teach the people?"

¹¹Jesus answered, "Only you can know the secret truths about the kingdom of heaven. Others cannot know these secret truths. ¹²The person who has something will be given more. And he will have all he needs. But the person who does not have much—even what he has will be taken from him. ¹³This is why I use stories to teach the people: They see, but they don't really see. They hear, but they don't really understand. ¹⁴So they show that the things Isaiah said about them are true:

'You will listen and you will hear,
 but you will not understand.

You will look and you will see,
 but you will not understand what you see.

¹⁵Yes, the minds of these people are now closed.
 They have ears, but they don't listen,

and they refuse to see.
This has happened so that they will not
see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their minds.
This has happened so that they will not
turn to me to heal them.'

Isaiah 6:9-10

¹⁶But you are blessed. You understand the things you see with your eyes. And you understand the things you hear with your ears. ¹⁷I tell you the truth. Many prophets and good people wanted to see the things that you see. But they did not see them. And many prophets and good people wanted to hear the things that you hear. But they did not hear them."

Jesus Explains the Story About the Planting of the Seeds

¹⁸"So listen to the meaning of that story about the farmer. ¹⁹What is the seed that fell by the road? That seed is like anyone who hears the teaching about the kingdom but does not understand it. The Evil One comes and takes away the things that were planted in that person's heart. ²⁰And what is the seed that fell on rocky ground? That seed is like the person who hears the teaching and quickly accepts it with joy. ²¹But he does not let the teaching go deep into his life. He keeps it only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the teaching he accepted, then he quickly gives up. ²²And what is the seed that fell among the thorny weeds? That seed is like the person who hears the teaching but lets worries about this life and love of money stop the teaching from growing. So the teaching does not produce fruit in that person's life. ²³But what is the seed that fell on the good ground? That seed is like the person who hears the teaching and understands it. He grows and produces fruit, sometimes 100 times more, sometimes 60 times more, and sometimes 30 times more."

A Story About Wheat and Weeds

²⁴Then Jesus told them another story. He said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who planted good seed in his field. ²⁵That night, when everyone was asleep, his enemy came and planted weeds among the wheat. Then the enemy went away.

²⁶ Later, the wheat grew and heads of grain grew on the wheat plants. But at the same time the weeds also grew. ²⁷ Then the man's servants came to him and said, 'You planted good seed in your field. Where did the weeds come from?'

²⁸ "The man answered, 'An enemy planted weeds.'

"The servants asked, 'Do you want us to pull up the weeds?'

²⁹ "The man answered, 'No, because when you pull up the weeds, you might also pull up the wheat. ³⁰ Let the weeds and the wheat grow together until the harvest time. At harvest time I will tell the workers this: First gather the weeds and tie them together to be burned. Then gather the wheat and bring it to my barn.'"

Jesus Uses More Stories to Teach the People

³¹ Then Jesus told them another story: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed. A man plants the seed in his field. ³² That seed is one of the smallest of all seeds. But when it grows, it is one of the largest garden plants. It becomes a tree, big enough for the birds to come and make nests in its branches."

³³ Then Jesus told them another story: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman mixes into a big bowl of flour to make bread. The yeast makes all the dough rise."

³⁴ Jesus used stories to tell all these things to the crowd. He always used stories to teach them. ³⁵ This was to make come true what had been said through the prophet:

"I will speak using stories;

I will tell things that have been secret
since the world was made."

Psalm 78:2

Jesus Explains the Story About the Wheat and the Weeds

³⁶ Then Jesus left the crowd and went into the house. His followers came to him and said, "Explain to us the meaning of the story about the weeds in the field."

³⁷ Jesus answered, "The man who planted the good seed in the field is the Son of Man. ³⁸ The field is the world, and the good seed are all of God's children in the kingdom. The weeds are those people who belong to the Evil One. ³⁹ And the enemy who planted the bad seed is the devil. The harvest time is the

end of this age. And the workers who gather are God's angels.

⁴⁰"The weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire. It will be this way at the end of this age. ⁴¹The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of the kingdom all who cause sin and all who do evil. ⁴²The angels will throw them into the place of fire. There the people will cry and grind their teeth. ⁴³Then the good people will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. You people who hear me, listen!"

Stories About a Treasure and a Pearl

⁴⁴"The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field. One day a man found the treasure, and then he hid it in the field again. The man was very happy to find the treasure. He went and sold everything that he owned to buy that field.

⁴⁵"Also, the kingdom of heaven is like a man looking for fine pearls. ⁴⁶One day he found a very valuable pearl. The man went and sold everything he had to buy that pearl."

A Story About a Fishing Net

⁴⁷"Also, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was put into the lake. The net caught many different kinds of fish. ⁴⁸When it was full, the fishermen pulled the net to the shore. They sat down and put all the good fish in baskets. Then they threw away the bad fish. ⁴⁹It will be this way at the end of this age. The angels will come and separate the evil people from the good people. ⁵⁰The angels will throw the evil people into the place of fire. In that place the people will cry and grind their teeth.

⁵¹Jesus asked his followers, "Do you understand all these things?"

They answered, "Yes, we understand."

⁵²Then Jesus said to them, "So every teacher of the law who has been taught about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house. He has both new things and old things saved in his house. And he brings out both those new things and old things."

Jesus Goes to His Home Town

⁵³When Jesus finished teaching with these stories, he left there. ⁵⁴He went to the town where he grew up. He taught the people in the synagogue, and they were amazed. They said, "Where did this man get this wisdom and this power to do miracles?" ⁵⁵He is only the son of the carpenter. And his mother is Mary. His brothers are James, Joseph, Simon and Judas. ⁵⁶And all his sisters are here with us. So where does this man get all these things?" ⁵⁷And the people refused to accept Jesus.

But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is honored everywhere except in his own town or in his own home."

⁵⁸The people there did not believe in Jesus. So Jesus did not do many miracles there.

Herod Hears About Jesus

14 At that time Herod, the ruler of Galilee, heard the reports about Jesus. ²So Herod said to his servants, "Jesus is really John the Baptist. He has risen from death. That is why he is able to do these miracles."

How John the Baptist Was Killed

³Sometime before this, Herod had arrested John, tied him up, and put him into prison. Herod did this because of Herodias. She was the wife of Philip, Herod's brother. ⁴Herod arrested John because he told Herod: "It is not right for you to have Herodias." ⁵Herod wanted to kill John, but he was afraid of the people because they believed John was a prophet.

⁶On Herod's birthday, the daughter of Herodias danced for Herod and his guests. Herod was very pleased with her, ⁷so he promised he would give her anything she wanted. ⁸Herodias told her daughter what to ask for. So she said to Herod, "Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter." ⁹The king was very sad. But he had promised to give her anything she wanted, and the people eating with him had heard his promise. So Herod ordered that what she asked for be done. ¹⁰He sent men to the prison to cut off John's head. ¹¹And the men brought John's head on a platter and gave it to the girl. She took it to her mother, Herodias. ¹²John's followers came and got

his body and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus what happened.

Jesus Feeds More than 5,000 People

¹³When Jesus heard what happened to John, Jesus left in a boat. He went to a lonely place by himself. But when the crowds heard about it, they followed him on foot from the towns.

¹⁴When Jesus arrived, he saw a large crowd. He felt sorry for them and healed those who were sick.

¹⁵Late that afternoon, his followers came to Jesus and said, "No one lives in this place, and it is already late. Send the people away so they can go to the towns and buy food for themselves."

¹⁶Jesus answered, "They don't need to go away. You give them some food to eat."

¹⁷The followers answered, "But we have only five loaves of bread and two fish."

¹⁸Jesus said, "Bring the bread and the fish to me." ¹⁹Then he told the people to sit down on the grass. He took the five loaves of bread and the two fish. Then he looked to heaven and thanked God for the food. Jesus divided the loaves of bread and gave them to his followers, and they gave the bread to the people. ²⁰All the people ate and were satisfied. After they finished eating, the followers filled 12 baskets with the pieces of food that were not eaten. ²¹There were about 5,000 men there who ate, as well as women and children.

Jesus Walks on the Lake

²²Then Jesus made his followers get into the boat. He told them to go ahead of him to the other side of the lake. Jesus stayed there to tell the people they could go home. ²³After he said good-bye to them, he went alone up into the hills to pray. It was late, and Jesus was there alone. ²⁴By this time, the boat was already far away on the lake. The boat was having trouble because of the waves, and the wind was blowing against it.

²⁵Between three and six o'clock in the morning, Jesus' followers were still in the boat. Jesus came to them walking on the water. ²⁶When the followers saw him walking on the water, they were afraid. They said, "It's a ghost!" and cried out in fear.

²⁷ But Jesus quickly spoke to them. He said, "Have courage! It is I! Don't be afraid."

²⁸ Peter said, "Lord, if that is really you, then tell me to come to you on the water."

²⁹ Jesus said, "Come."

And Peter left the boat and walked on the water to Jesus.
³⁰ But when Peter saw the wind and the waves, he was afraid and began to sink. He shouted, "Lord, save me!"

³¹ Then Jesus reached out his hand and caught Peter. Jesus said, "Your faith is small. Why did you doubt?"

³² When Peter and Jesus climbed into the boat, the wind became calm. ³³ Then those who were in the boat worshiped Jesus and said, "Truly you are the Son of God!"

³⁴ After they crossed the lake, they came to the shore at Genesaret. ³⁵ The people there saw Jesus and knew who he was. So they told people all around there that Jesus had come. They brought all their sick to him. ³⁶ They begged Jesus to let them just touch the edge of his coat to be healed. And all the sick people who touched it were healed.

God's Law Is More Important than Rules People Make

15 Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem. They asked him, ² "Why do your followers not obey the rules given to us by the great people who lived before us? Your followers don't wash their hands before they eat!"

³ Jesus answered, "And why do you refuse to obey God's command so that you can follow those rules you have? ⁴ God said, 'Honor your father and mother.'^a And God also said, 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be killed.'^b ⁵ But you say that a person can tell his father or mother, 'I have something I could use to help you. But I will not use it for you. I will give it to God.'^c ⁶ You teach that person not to honor his father. You teach that it is not important to do what God said. You think that it is more important to follow the rules you have. ⁷ You are hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he spoke about you:

⁸ "These people say they honor me,

^{4a} Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16. ^{4b} Exodus 21:17.

but they don't make me an important part of their lives.

⁹Their worship of me is worthless.

The things they teach are only rules that people make.'"

Isaiah 29:13

¹⁰Jesus called the crowd to him. He said, "Listen and understand what I am saying. ¹¹It is not what a person puts into his mouth that makes him unclean. It is what comes out of his mouth that makes him unclean."

¹²Then his followers came to Jesus and asked, "Do you know that the Pharisees are angry because of what you said?"

¹³Jesus answered, "Every plant that my Father in heaven has not planted himself will be pulled up by the roots. ¹⁴Stay away from the Pharisees. They are blind leaders. And if a blind man leads another blind man, then both men will fall into a ditch."

¹⁵Peter said, "Explain the story to us."

¹⁶Jesus said, "You still have trouble understanding? ¹⁷Surely you know that all the food that enters the mouth goes into the stomach. Then that food goes out of the body. ¹⁸But what a person says with his mouth comes from the way he thinks. And these are the things that make him unclean. ¹⁹Out of his mind come: evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual sins, stealing, lying, saying bad things against other people. ²⁰These things make a person unclean. But eating with unwashed hands does not make him unclean."

Jesus Helps a Non-Jewish Woman

²¹Jesus left that place and went to the area of Tyre and Sidon.

²²A Canaanite woman from that area came to Jesus. The woman cried out, "Lord, Son of David, please help me! My daughter has a demon, and she is suffering very much."

²³But Jesus did not answer the woman. So the followers came to Jesus and begged him, "Tell the woman to go away. She is following us and shouting."

²⁴Jesus answered, "God sent me only to the lost people^a of Israel."

²⁵Then the woman came to Jesus again. She bowed before him and said, "Lord, help me!"

^{24a} Or *sheep*.

²⁶Jesus answered, "It is not right to take the children's bread and give it to the dogs."

²⁷The woman said, "Yes, Lord, but even the dogs eat the pieces of food that fall from their masters' table."

²⁸Then Jesus answered, "Woman, you have great faith! I will do what you asked me to do." And at that moment the woman's daughter was healed.

Jesus Heals Many People

²⁹Then Jesus left that place and went to the shore of Lake Galilee. He went up on a hill and sat there.

³⁰Great crowds came to Jesus. They brought their sick with them: the lame, the blind, the crippled, the dumb, and many others. They put them at Jesus' feet, and he healed them. ³¹The crowd was amazed when they saw that people who could not speak were able to speak again. The crippled were made strong again. Those who could not walk were able to walk again. The blind were able to see again. And they praised the God of Israel for this.

Jesus Feeds More than 4,000 People

³²Jesus called his followers to him and said, "I feel sorry for these people. They have been with me three days, and now they have nothing to eat. I don't want to send them away hungry. They might faint while going home."

³³His followers asked him, "Where can we get enough bread to feed all these people? We are far away from any town."

³⁴Jesus asked, "How many loaves of bread do you have?"

They answered, "We have seven loaves and a few small fish."

³⁵Jesus told the people to sit on the ground. ³⁶He took the seven loaves of bread and the fish and gave thanks to God for the food. Then Jesus divided the food and gave it to his followers. They gave the food to the people. ³⁷All the people ate and were satisfied. After this, the followers filled seven baskets with the pieces of food that were not eaten. ³⁸There were about 4,000 men there who ate, besides women and children. ³⁹After they ate, Jesus told the people to go home. He got into the boat and went to the area of Magadan.

The Jewish Leaders Ask for a Miracle

16 The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus. They wanted to trap him. So they asked him to show them a miracle to prove that he was from God.

²Jesus answered, "When you see the sunset, you say we will have good weather because the sky is red. ³And in the morning you say that it will be a rainy day because the sky is dark and red. You see these signs in the sky and you know what they mean. In the same way, you see the things that are happening now. But you don't know their meaning." ⁴Evil and sinful people ask for a miracle as a sign. But they will have no sign—only the sign of Jonah." Then Jesus left them and went away.

Jesus Warns Against the Jewish Leaders

⁵Jesus and his followers went across the lake. But the followers forgot to bring bread. ⁶Jesus said to them, "Be careful! Guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and the Sadducees."

⁷The followers discussed the meaning of this. They said, "Did Jesus say this because we forgot to bring bread?"

⁸Jesus knew that they were talking about this. So he asked them, "Why are you talking about not having bread? Your faith is small. ⁹You still don't understand? Remember the five loaves of bread that fed the 5,000 people? And remember that you filled many baskets? ¹⁰And remember the seven loaves of bread that fed the 4,000 people? Remember that you filled many baskets then also? ¹¹So I was not talking to you about bread. Why don't you understand that? I am telling you to guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and the Sadducees." ¹²Then the followers understood what Jesus meant. He was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread. He was telling them to guard against the teaching of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

Peter Says That Jesus Is the Christ

¹³Jesus went to the area of Caesarea Philippi. He asked his followers, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

¹⁴They answered, "Some people say you are John the Baptist. Others say you are Elijah. And others say that you are Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

3^a The earliest Greek copies do not have verses 2 and 3.

¹⁵Then Jesus asked them, "And who do you say I am?"

¹⁶Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ," the Son of the living God."

¹⁷Jesus answered, "You are blessed, Simon son of Jonah. No person taught you that. My Father in heaven showed you who I am. ¹⁸So I tell you, you are Peter.^b And I will build my church on this rock. The power of death^c will not be able to defeat my church. ¹⁹I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. The things you don't allow on earth will be the things that God does not allow. The things you allow on earth will be the things that God allows." ²⁰Then Jesus warned his followers not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.

Jesus Tells His Followers That He Must Die

²¹From that time on Jesus began telling his followers that he must go to Jerusalem. He explained that the older Jewish leaders, the leading priests, and the teachers of the law would make him suffer many things. And he told them that he must be killed. Then, on the third day, he would be raised from death.

²²Peter took Jesus aside and began to criticize him. Peter said, "God save you from those things, Lord! They will never happen to you!"

²³Then Jesus said to Peter, "Go away from me, Satan! You are not helping me! You don't care about the things of God. You care only about things that men think are important."

²⁴Then Jesus said to his followers, "If anyone wants to follow me, he must say 'No' to the things he wants. He must accept the cross that is given to him, and he must follow me. ²⁵Whoever wants to save his life will lose it. And whoever gives his life for me will save it. ²⁶It is worth nothing for a man to have the whole world if he loses his soul. He could never pay enough to buy back his soul. ²⁷The Son of Man will come again with his Father's glory and with his angels. At that time, the Son of Man will reward each person for what he has done. ²⁸I tell you the truth. There are some people standing here who, before they die, will see the Son of Man coming with his kingdom."

^{16a} Or *Messiah*; also in verse 20. ^{18b} The Greek name *Peter*, like the Aramaic name *Cephas*, means rock. ^{18c} Or *gates of Hades*.

Three Followers See Jesus Talking with Moses and Elijah

17 Six days later, Jesus took Peter, James, and John the brother of James up on a high mountain. They were all alone there. ²While they watched, Jesus was changed. His face became bright like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. ³Then two men were there, talking with him. The men were Moses and Elijah.

⁴Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you want, I will put three tents here—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

⁵While Peter was talking, a bright cloud covered them. A voice came from the cloud. The voice said, "This is my Son and I love him. I am very pleased with him. Obey him!"

⁶The followers with Jesus heard the voice. They were so frightened that they fell to the ground. ⁷But Jesus went to them and touched them. He said, "Stand up. Don't be afraid." ⁸When the followers looked up, they saw Jesus was now alone.

⁹When Jesus and the followers were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, "Don't tell anyone what you saw on the mountain until the Son of Man has been raised from death."

¹⁰The followers asked Jesus, "Why do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?"

¹¹Jesus answered, "They are right to say that Elijah is coming. And it is true that Elijah will make everything the way it should be. ¹²But I tell you, Elijah has already come, and people did not know who he was. They did to him everything they wanted to do. It will be the same with the Son of Man. Those same people will make the Son of Man suffer." ¹³Then the followers understood that Jesus was talking about John the Baptist.

Jesus Heals a Sick Boy

¹⁴Jesus and his followers went back to the crowd. A man came to Jesus and bowed before him. ¹⁵The man said, "Lord, please help my son. He has epilepsy and is suffering very much. He often falls into the fire or into the water. ¹⁶I brought him to your followers, but they could not cure him."

¹⁷Jesus answered, "You people have no faith. Your lives are

all wrong. How long must I stay with you? How long must I continue to be patient with you? Bring the boy here.” ¹⁸Jesus gave a strong command to the demon inside the boy. Then the demon came out, and the boy was healed.

¹⁹The followers came to Jesus when he was alone. They asked, “Why were we not able to make it go out?”

²⁰Jesus answered, “You were not able to drive out the demon because your faith is too small. I tell you the truth. If your faith is as big as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and the mountain will move. All things will be possible for you.” ^{21a}

Jesus Talks About His Death

²²Later, the followers met together in Galilee. Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man will be given into the control of some men. ²³They will kill him but on the third day he will be raised from death.” And the followers were filled with sadness.

Jesus Teaches About Paying Taxes

²⁴Jesus and his followers went to Capernaum. There some men came to Peter. They were the men who collected the two-drachma tax. They asked, “Does your teacher pay the two-drachma tax?”

²⁵Peter answered, “Yes, Jesus pays the tax.”

Peter went into the house where Jesus was. Before Peter could speak, Jesus said to him, “The kings on the earth collect different kinds of taxes. But who are the people who pay the taxes? Are they the king’s children? Or do others pay the taxes? What do you think?”

²⁶Peter answered, “Other people pay the taxes.”

Jesus said to Peter, “Then the children of the king don’t have to pay taxes. ²⁷But we don’t want to make these tax collectors angry. So go to the lake and fish. After you catch the first fish, open its mouth. Inside its mouth you will find a four-drachma coin. Take that coin and give it to the tax collectors. That will pay the tax for you and me.”

^{21a} Some Greek copies add verse 21: *That kind of spirit comes out only if you use prayer and fasting.*

Jesus Tells His Followers Who Is the Greatest

18 At that time the followers came to Jesus and asked, “Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”

²Jesus called a little child to him and stood the child before the followers. ³Then Jesus said, “I tell you the truth. You must change and become like little children. If you don’t do this, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴The greatest person in the kingdom of heaven is the one who makes himself humble like this child.

⁵“Whoever accepts a little child in my name accepts me. ⁶If one of these little children believes in me, and someone causes that child to sin, then it would be better for that person to have a large rock tied around his neck and be drowned in the sea. ⁷How terrible for the people of the world because of the things that cause them to sin. Such things will happen, but how terrible for the one who causes them to happen. ⁸If your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to have only part of your body but have life forever. That is much better than to have two hands and two feet but be thrown into the fire that burns forever. ⁹If your eye causes you to sin, take it out and throw it away. It is better for you to have only one eye and have life forever than to have two eyes but be thrown into the fire of hell.”

Jesus Uses a Story About a Lost Sheep

¹⁰“Be careful. Don’t think these little children are worth nothing. I tell you that they have angels in heaven who are always with my Father in heaven. ¹¹“

¹²“If a man has 100 sheep, but one of the sheep gets lost, he will leave the other 99 sheep on the hill. He will go to look for the lost sheep. ¹³And if he finds it, he is happier about that one sheep than about the 99 that were never lost. I tell you the truth. ¹⁴In the same way, your Father in heaven does not want any of these little children to be lost.”

When a Person Does Something Wrong Against You

¹⁵“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him what he did wrong. Do this in private. If he listens to you, then you

^{11a} Some Greek copies add verse 11: *The Son of Man came to save lost people.*

have helped him to be your brother again. ¹⁶But if he refuses to listen, then go to him again and take one or two other people with you. Then there will be two or three who will be able to tell all that happened. ¹⁷If he refuses to listen to them, then tell it to the church. If he refuses to listen to the church, then treat him as you would one who does not believe in God. Treat him as if he were a tax collector.

¹⁸"I tell you the truth. The things you don't allow on earth will be the things God does not allow. The things you allow on earth will be the things that God allows.

¹⁹"Also, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about something that you ask, then it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ²⁰This is true because if two or three people come together in my name, I am there with them."

Story About a Servant Who Would Not Forgive

²¹Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, when my brother sins against me, how many times must I forgive him? Should I forgive him as many as seven times?"

²²Jesus answered, "I tell you, you must forgive him more than seven times. You must forgive him even if he does wrong to you 77 times."

²³"The kingdom of heaven is like a king who decided to collect the money his servants owed him. ²⁴So the king began to collect his money. One servant owed him several million dollars in silver. ²⁵But the servant did not have enough money to pay his master, the king. So the master ordered that everything the servant owned should be sold, even the servant's wife and children. The money would be used to pay the king what the servant owed.

²⁶"But the servant fell on his knees and begged, 'Be patient with me. I will pay you everything I owe.' ²⁷The master felt sorry for his servant. So the master told the servant he did not have to pay. He let the servant go free.

²⁸"Later, that same servant found another servant who owed him a few dollars of silver. The servant grabbed the other servant around the neck and said, 'Pay me the money you owe me!'

^{22a} Or seventy times seven.

²⁹“The other servant fell on his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me. I will pay you everything I owe.’

³⁰“But the first servant refused to be patient. He threw the other servant into prison until he could pay everything he owed. ³¹When all the other servants saw what happened, they were very sorry. So they went and told their master all that had happened.

³²“Then the master called his servant in and said, ‘You evil servant! You begged me to forgive your debt. So I told you that you did not have to pay anything. ³³I had mercy on you. You should have had the same mercy on that other servant.’ ³⁴The master was very angry, and he put the servant in prison to be punished. The servant had to stay in prison until he could pay everything he owed.

³⁵“This king did what my heavenly Father will do to you if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

Jesus Teaches About Divorce

19 After Jesus said all these things, he left Galilee. He went into the area of Judea on the other side of the Jordan River. ²Large crowds followed Jesus, and he healed them there.

³Some Pharisees came to Jesus and tried to trick him. They asked, “Is it right for a man to divorce his wife for any reason he chooses?”

⁴Jesus answered, “Surely you have read: When God made the world, ‘he made people male and female.’^a ⁵And God said, ‘This is why a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife. The two people will become one body.’^b ⁶So the two are not two, but one. God joined the two people together, and no one should separate them.”

⁷The Pharisees asked, “Why then did Moses give a command allowing a man to divorce his wife by giving her a certificate of divorce?”

⁸Jesus answered, “Moses allowed you to divorce your wives because you refused to accept God’s teaching. But divorce was not allowed in the beginning. ⁹I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman is guilty of adultery. The only reason for a man to divorce and marry again is if

^{4a} Genesis 1:27 or 5:2. ^{5b} Genesis 2:24.

his first wife has sexual relations with another man.”

¹⁰The followers said to him, “If that is the only reason a man can divorce his wife, then it is better not to marry.”

¹¹Jesus answered, “Not everyone can accept this teaching. But God has made some able to accept it. ¹²There are different reasons why some men cannot marry. Some men were born without the ability to become fathers. Others were made that way later in life by other people. And other men have given up marriage because of the kingdom of heaven. But the person who can accept this teaching should accept it.”

Jesus Welcomes Children

¹³Then the people brought their little children to Jesus so that he could put his hands on them and pray for them. When his followers saw this, they told the people to stop bringing their children to Jesus. ¹⁴But Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me. Don’t stop them, because the kingdom of heaven belongs to people who are like these children.” ¹⁵After Jesus put his hands on the children, he left there.

A Rich Young Man Asks Jesus an Important Question

¹⁶A man came to Jesus and asked, “Teacher, what good thing must I do to have life forever?”

¹⁷Jesus answered, “Why do you ask me about what is good? Only God is good. But if you want to have life forever, obey the commandments.”

¹⁸The man asked, “Which commandments?”

Jesus answered, “‘You must not murder, you must not be guilty of the sin of adultery, you must not steal, you must not lie, ¹⁹you must honor your father and mother,’^a and you must love your neighbor as you love yourself.’”

²⁰The young man said, “I have obeyed all these things. What else do I need to do?”

²¹Jesus answered, “If you want to be perfect, then go and sell all the things you own. Give the money to the poor. If you do this, you will have a treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me!”

²²But when the young man heard this, he became very sad.

^{19a} Exodus 20:12–16; Deuteronomy 5:16–20. ^{19b} Leviticus 19:18.

The man was very rich. So he left Jesus.

²³Then Jesus said to his followers, "I tell you the truth. It will be very hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven.

²⁴Yes, I tell you that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God."

²⁵When the followers heard this they were very surprised. They asked, "Then who can be saved?"

²⁶Jesus looked at them and said, "This is something that men cannot do. But God can do all things."

²⁷Peter said to Jesus, "We left everything we had and followed you. So what will we have?"

²⁸Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth. When the new age comes, the Son of Man will sit on his great throne. And all of you who followed me will sit on 12 thrones, and you will judge the 12 family groups of Israel. ²⁹And everyone who has left houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children, or farms to follow me will get much more than he left. And he will have life forever. ³⁰Many who have the highest place in life now will have the lowest place in the future. And many who have the lowest place now will have the highest place in the future."

Jesus Uses a Story About Workers on a Farm

20 "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who owned some land. The man grew grapes on his land. One morning, he went out very early to hire some men to work in his field.

²The man agreed to pay the workers one silver coin for working that day. Then he sent them into the field to work.

³"About nine o'clock the man went to the marketplace and saw some other people standing there, doing nothing. ⁴So he said to them, 'If you go and work in my field, I will pay you what your work is worth.' ⁵So they went to work in the field.

"The man went out again about twelve o'clock and again at three o'clock. Both times he hired people to work in his field.

⁶About five o'clock the man went to the marketplace again. He saw others standing there. He asked them, 'Why did you stand here all day doing nothing?'

⁷"They answered, 'No one gave us a job.'

"The man said to them, 'Then you can go and work in my field.'

⁸“At the end of the day, the owner of the field said to the boss of all the workers, ‘Call the workers and pay them. Start by paying the last people I hired. Then pay all of them, ending with the workers I hired first.’

⁹“The workers who were hired at five o’clock came to get their pay. Each worker received one silver coin. ¹⁰Then the workers who were hired first came to get their pay. They thought they would be paid more than the others. But each one of them also received one silver coin. ¹¹When they got their silver coin, they complained to the man who owned the land. ¹²They said, ‘Those people were hired last and worked only one hour. But you paid them the same as you paid us. And we worked hard all day in the hot sun.’

¹³“But the man who owned the field said to one of those workers, ‘Friend, I am being fair to you. You agreed to work for one silver coin. ¹⁴So take your pay and go. I want to give the man who was hired last the same pay that I gave you. ¹⁵I can do what I want with my own money. Are you jealous because I am good to those people?’

¹⁶“So those who have the last place now will have the first place in the future. And those who have the first place now will have the last place in the future.”

Jesus Talks About His Own Death

¹⁷Jesus was going to Jerusalem. His 12 followers were with him. While they were on the way, Jesus gathered the followers together and spoke to them privately. He said to them, ¹⁸“We are going to Jerusalem. The Son of Man will be turned over to the leading priests and the teachers of the law. They will say that the Son of Man must die. ¹⁹They will give the Son of Man to the non-Jewish people. They will laugh at him and beat him with whips, and then they will kill him on a cross. But on the third day after his death, he will be raised to life again.”

A Mother Asks Jesus to Do Something Special for Her Sons

²⁰Then the wife of Zebedee came to Jesus. Her sons were with her. The mother bowed before Jesus and asked him to do something for her.

²¹Jesus asked, “What do you want?”

She said, "Promise that one of my sons will sit at your right side in your kingdom. And promise that the other son will sit at your left side."

²²But Jesus said, "You don't understand what you are asking. Can you accept the kind of suffering that I must suffer?"

The sons answered, "Yes, we can!"

²³Jesus said to them, "Truly you will suffer the same things that I will suffer. But I cannot choose who will sit at my right side or my left side. Those places belong to those for whom my Father has prepared them."

²⁴The other ten followers heard this and were angry with the two brothers.

²⁵Jesus called all the followers together. He said, "You know that the rulers of the non-Jewish people love to show their power over the people. And their important leaders love to use all their authority. ²⁶But it should not be that way among you. If one of you wants to become great, then he must serve the rest of you like a servant. ²⁷If one of you wants to become first, then he must serve the rest of you like a slave. ²⁸So it is with the Son of Man. The Son of Man did not come for other people to serve him. He came to serve others. The Son of Man came to give his life to save many people."

Jesus Heals Two Blind Men

²⁹When Jesus and his followers were leaving Jericho, a great many people followed Jesus. ³⁰There were two blind men sitting by the road. The blind men heard that Jesus was going by, so they shouted, "Lord, Son of David, please help us!"

³¹All the people criticized the blind men. They told them to be quiet. But the blind men shouted more and more, "Lord, Son of David, please help us!"

³²Jesus stopped and said to the blind men, "What do you want me to do for you?"

³³They answered, "Lord, we want to be able to see."

³⁴Jesus felt sorry for the blind men. He touched their eyes and at once they were able to see. Then the men followed Jesus.

^{22a} Or *drink the cup that I must drink.*

Jesus Enters Jerusalem like a King

21 Jesus and his followers were coming closer to Jerusalem. But first they stopped at Bethphage at the hill called the Mount of Olives. From there Jesus sent two of his followers into the town. ²He said to them, "Go to the town you can see there. When you enter it you will find a donkey tied there with its colt. Untie them and bring them to me. ³If anyone asks you why you are taking the donkeys, tell him, 'The Master needs them. He will send them back soon.'"

⁴This was to make clear the full meaning of what was said through the prophet:

⁵"Tell the city of Zion,

'Now your king is coming to you.

He is humble and he is riding on a donkey.

He is riding on a colt, born of a work animal.'" *Zechariah 9:9*

⁶The followers went and did what Jesus told them to do. ⁷They brought the donkey and the colt to Jesus. They laid their coats on the donkeys, and Jesus sat on them. ⁸Many people spread their coats on the road before Jesus. Others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹Some of the people were walking ahead of Jesus. Others were walking behind him. All the people were shouting,

"Praise" to the Son of David!

God bless the One who comes

in the name of the Lord!

Praise to God in heaven!"

Psalms 118:26

¹⁰Then Jesus went into Jerusalem. The city was filled with excitement. The people asked, "Who is this man?"

¹¹The crowd answered, "This man is Jesus. He is the prophet from the town of Nazareth in Galilee."

Jesus Goes to the Temple

¹²Jesus went into the temple. He threw out all the people who were buying and selling there. He turned over the tables that belonged to the men who were exchanging different kinds of money. And he upset the benches of those who were selling doves. ¹³Jesus said to all the people there, "It is written, 'My

house will be called a house for prayer.’^a But you are changing God’s house into a ‘hiding place for thieves.’^b”

¹⁴The blind and the crippled came to Jesus in the temple, and Jesus healed them. ¹⁵The leading priests and the teachers of the law saw that Jesus was doing wonderful things and that the children were praising him in the temple. They were saying, “Praise^c to the Son of David.” All these things made the priests and the teachers of the law very angry.

¹⁶They asked Jesus, “Do you hear the things these children are saying?”

Jesus answered, “Yes. Haven’t you read in the Scriptures, ‘You have taught children and babies to give praise.’^d?”

¹⁷Then Jesus left and went out of the city to Bethany, where he spent the night.

Jesus Shows His Followers the Power of Faith

¹⁸Early the next morning, Jesus was going back to the city. He was very hungry. ¹⁹He saw a fig tree beside the road. Jesus went to it, but there were no figs on the tree. There were only leaves. So Jesus said to the tree, “You will never again have fruit!” The tree immediately dried up.

²⁰His followers saw this and were amazed. They asked, “How did the fig tree dry up so quickly?”

²¹Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth. If you have faith and do not doubt, you will be able to do what I did to this tree. And you will be able to do more. You will be able to say to this mountain, ‘Go, mountain, fall into the sea.’ And if you have faith, it will happen. ²²If you believe, you will get anything you ask for in prayer.”

The Jewish Leaders Doubt Jesus’ Authority

²³Jesus went to the temple. While he was teaching there, the leading priests and the older leaders of the people came to Jesus. They said to him, “Tell us! What authority do you have to do these things? Who gave you this authority?”

²⁴Jesus answered, “I will ask you a question, too. If you answer me, then I will tell you what authority I have to do these

^{13a} Isaiah 56:7. ^{13b} Jeremiah 7:11. ^{15c} Or *Hosanna*. ^{16d} Septuagint (Greek) version of Psalm 8:3.

things. ²⁵Tell me: When John baptized people, did that come from God or from man?"

The priests and the leaders argued about Jesus' question. They said to each other, "If we answer, 'John's baptism was from God,' then Jesus will say, 'Then why didn't you believe John?' ²⁶But if we say, 'It was from man,' we are afraid of what the people will do because they all believe that John was a prophet."

²⁷So they answered Jesus, "We don't know."

Then Jesus said, "Then I won't tell you what authority I have to do these things!"

Jesus Uses a Story to Teach the Jewish Leaders

²⁸"Tell me what you think about this: There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first son and said, 'Son, go and work today in my field of grapevines.'

²⁹"The son answered, 'I will not go.' But later the son decided he should go, and he went.

³⁰"Then the father went to the other son and said, 'Son, go and work today in my field of grapevines.' The son answered, 'Yes, sir, I will go and work.' But he did not go.

³¹"Which of the two sons obeyed his father?"

The priests and leaders answered, "The first son."

Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth. The tax collectors and the prostitutes will enter the kingdom of God before you do.

³²John came to show you the right way to live, and you did not believe him. But the tax collectors and prostitutes believed John. You saw this, but you still refused to change and believe him."

God Sends His Son

³³"Listen to this story: There was a man who owned a field. He planted the field with grapevines. He put a wall around the field and dug a hole for a winepress. Then he built a tower. He leased the land to some farmers and left for a trip.

³⁴"Later, it was time for the grapes to be picked. So the man sent his servants to the farmers to get his share of the grapes.

³⁵"But the farmers grabbed the servants, beat one, killed another, and then killed a third servant with rocks. ³⁶So the man

sent some other servants to the farmers. He sent more servants than he sent the first time. But the farmers did the same thing to the servants that they had done before. ³⁷So the man decided to send his son to the farmers. He said, 'The farmers will respect my son.'

³⁸"But when the farmers saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the owner's son. This field will be his. If we kill him, then his field will be ours!' ³⁹So the farmers grabbed the son, threw him out of the field, and killed him.

⁴⁰"So what will the owner of the field do to these farmers when he comes?"

⁴¹The priests and leaders said, "He will surely kill those evil men. Then he will lease the field to some other farmers. They will give him his share of the crop at harvest time."

⁴²Jesus said to them, "Surely you have read this in the Scriptures:

'The stone that the builders did not want
became the cornerstone.

The Lord did this,

and it is wonderful to us.'

Psalms 118:22-23

⁴³"So I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you. God's kingdom will be given to people who do what God wants in his kingdom. ⁴⁴The person who falls on this stone will be broken. But if the stone falls on him, he will be crushed."

⁴⁵The leading priests and the Pharisees heard these stories that Jesus told and knew that he was talking about them. ⁴⁶They wanted to arrest him. But they were afraid of the people, because the people believed that Jesus was a prophet.

Story About a King Inviting People to a Wedding Dinner

22 Jesus used stories to tell other things to the people. He said, ²"The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding feast for his son. ³The king invited some people to the feast. He sent his servants to tell the people to come to the feast, but they refused to come.

⁴"Then the king sent other servants. He said to them, 'Tell those who have been invited that my feast is ready. I have killed my best bulls and calves for the dinner. Everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.'

⁵“But the people refused to listen to the servants. They went to do other things. One went to work in his field, and another went to his business. ⁶Some of the other people grabbed the servants, beat them, and killed them. ⁷The king was very angry. He sent his army to kill the murderers and burn their city.

⁸“After that, the king said to his servants, ‘The wedding feast is ready. I invited those people, but they did not deserve to come to my feast. ⁹So go to the street corners and invite everyone you see. Tell them to come to my feast.’ ¹⁰So the servants went into the streets. They gathered everyone they could find, both good and bad. And the wedding hall was filled with guests.

¹¹“Then the king came in to see all the guests. He saw a man there who was not dressed in the right clothes for a wedding. ¹²The king said, ‘Friend, how were you allowed to come in here? You are not wearing the right clothes for a wedding.’ But the man said nothing. ¹³So the king told some servants, ‘Tie this man’s hands and feet, and throw him out into the darkness. In that place, people will cry and grind their teeth.’

¹⁴“Yes, many people are invited. But only a few are chosen.”

Some Jewish Leaders Try to Trick Jesus

¹⁵Then the Pharisees left the place where Jesus was teaching. They made plans to trap Jesus with a question. ¹⁶They sent some of their own followers and some men from the group called Herodians. These men said, “Teacher, we know that you are an honest man. We know that you teach the truth about God’s way. You are not afraid of what other people think about you. All men are the same to you. ¹⁷So tell us what you think. Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar? Yes or no?”

¹⁸But Jesus knew that these men were trying to trick him. So he said, “You hypocrites! Why are you trying to trap me? ¹⁹Show me a coin used for paying the tax.” The men showed him a silver coin. ²⁰Then Jesus asked, “Whose picture is on the coin? And whose name is written on the coin?”

²¹The men answered, “Caesar’s.”

Then Jesus said to them, “Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s. And give to God the things that are God’s.”

²²The men heard what Jesus said, and they were amazed. They left him and went away.

Some Sadducees Try to Trick Jesus

²³That same day some Sadducees came to Jesus. (Sadducees believe that no person will rise from death.) The Sadducees asked Jesus a question. ²⁴They said, "Teacher, Moses told us that if a married man dies and he had no children, then his brother must marry the widow. Then they will have children for the dead brother. ²⁵There were seven brothers among us. The first one married but died. Since he had no children, his brother married the widow. ²⁶Then the second brother also died. The same thing happened to the third brother and all the other brothers. ²⁷The woman was last to die. ²⁸But all seven men had married her. So when people rise from death, whose wife will she be?"

²⁹Jesus answered, "You don't understand because you don't know what the Scriptures say. And you don't know about the power of God. ³⁰When people rise from death, there will be no marriage. People will not be married to each other. They will be like the angels in heaven. ³¹Surely you have read what God said to you about the rising from death? ³²God said, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.'^a God is the God of living people, not dead people."

³³All the people heard this. They were amazed at Jesus' teaching.

Which Commandment Is the Most Important?

³⁴The Pharisees learned that the Sadducees could not argue with Jesus' answers to them. So the Pharisees met together. ³⁵One Pharisee was an expert in the law. He asked Jesus a question to test him. ³⁶The Pharisee asked, "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the most important?"

³⁷Jesus answered, " 'Love the Lord your God. You must love him with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.'^b ³⁸This is the first and most important commandment. ³⁹And the second commandment is like the first: 'Love your neighbor as you

^{32a} Exodus 3:6. ^{37b} Deuteronomy 6:5.

love yourself.’”⁴⁰ All the law and the writings of the prophets take their meaning from these two commandments.”

Jesus Asks the Pharisees a Question About the Christ

⁴¹While the Pharisees were together, Jesus asked them a question. ⁴²He asked, “What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?”

The Pharisees answered, “The Christ is the Son of David.”

⁴³Then Jesus said to them, “Then why did David call him ‘Lord’? David was speaking by the power of the Spirit. David said,

⁴⁴‘The Lord [God] said to my Lord [Christ]:

Sit at my right side,

until I put your enemies under your control.’”

Psalm 110:1

⁴⁵David calls the Christ ‘Lord.’ So how can he be David’s son?”

⁴⁶None of the Pharisees could answer Jesus’ question. And after that day no one was brave enough to ask Jesus any more questions.

Jesus Criticizes the Jewish Religious Leaders

23 Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his followers. Jesus said, ²“The teachers of the law and the Pharisees have the authority to tell you what the law of Moses says. ³So you should obey and follow whatever they tell you. But their lives are not good examples for you to follow. They tell you what to do, but they don’t do it. ⁴They tie up heavy loads and put them on people’s backs. But they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to help carry the loads.

⁵“The reason they do good things is so other people will see them. They make the boxes^d of Scriptures that they wear bigger and bigger. And they make their special prayer clothes very long so that people will notice them. ⁶Those Pharisees and teachers of the law love to have the most important seats at the feasts. And they love to have the most important seats in the synagogues. ⁷They love people to show respect to them in the marketplace. And they love to have people call them ‘Teacher.’

^{39a} Leviticus 19:18. ^{42b} Or *Messiah*; also in verse 45. ^{44c} Or *feet*. ^{5d} Small leather boxes containing four important Scriptures. Some Jews tied these to the forehead and left arm.

⁸“But you must not be called ‘Teacher.’ You are all brothers together. You have only one Teacher. ⁹And don’t call any person on earth ‘Father.’ You have one Father. He is in heaven. ¹⁰And you should not be called ‘Master.’ You have only one Master, the Christ.” ¹¹He who serves you as a servant is the greatest among you. ¹²Whoever makes himself great will be made humble. Whoever makes himself humble will be made great.

¹³“How terrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees! You are hypocrites! You close the door for people to enter the kingdom of heaven. You yourselves don’t enter, and you stop others who are trying to enter. ^{14^b}

¹⁵“How terrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees! You are hypocrites! You travel across land and sea to find one person who will follow your ways. When you find that person, you make him more fit for hell than you are.

¹⁶“How terrible for you, blind guides. You say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple when he makes a promise, that means nothing. But if anyone swears by the gold that is in the temple, then he must keep his promise.’ ¹⁷You are blind fools! Which is greater: the gold or the temple that makes that gold holy?

¹⁸And you say, ‘If anyone swears by the altar when he makes a promise, that means nothing. But if he swears by the gift on the altar, then he must keep his promise.’ ¹⁹You are blind! Which is greater: the gift or the altar that makes the gift holy?

²⁰The person who swears by the altar is really using the altar and also everything on the altar. ²¹And the person who uses the temple to make a promise is really using the temple and also everything in the temple. ²²The person who uses heaven to make a promise is also using God’s throne and the One who sits on that throne.

²³“How terrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees! You are hypocrites! You give to God one-tenth of your spices—your mint, dill, and cummin. But you don’t obey the really important teachings of the law—being fair, showing mercy, and being loyal. These are the things you should do, as well as

^{10^a} Or *Messiah*. ^{14^b} Some Greek copies add verse 14: *How terrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees. You are hypocrites. You take away widows’ houses, and you make long prayers so that people can see you. So you will have a worse punishment.*

those other things. ²⁴You guide the people, but you are blind! You are like a person who picks a fly out of his drink and then swallows a camel!

²⁵"How terrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees! You are hypocrites! You wash the outside of your cups and dishes. But inside they are full of things that you got by cheating others and pleasing only yourselves. ²⁶Pharisees, you are blind! First make the inside of the cup clean and good. Then the outside of the cup can be truly clean.

²⁷"How terrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees. You are hypocrites! You are like tombs that are painted white. The outside of those tombs looks fine. But inside, they are full of the bones of dead people, and all kinds of unclean things are there. ²⁸It is the same with you. People look at you and think you are good. But on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and evil.

²⁹"How terrible for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees! You are hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets. You show honor to the graves of people who lived good lives. ³⁰And you say, 'If we had lived during the time of our fathers, we would not have helped them kill the prophets.' ³¹But you give proof that you are children of those people who murdered the prophets. ³²And you will complete the sin that your fathers started!

³³"You are snakes! A family of poisonous snakes! How will you escape being judged guilty and being sent to hell? ³⁴So I tell you this: I am sending to you prophets and wise men and teachers. You will kill some of these people. You will nail some of them to crosses. You will beat some of them in your synagogues. You will chase them from town to town. ³⁵So you will be guilty for the death of all the good people who have been killed on earth. You will be guilty for the murder of that good man Abel. And you will be guilty for the murder of Zechariah,^a son of Berachiah. He was murdered between the temple and the altar. ³⁶I tell you the truth. All of these things will happen to you people who are living now."

^{35a} In the Hebrew Old Testament, the first and last men to be murdered.

Jesus Feels Sorry for the People of Jerusalem

³⁷“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You kill the prophets and kill with rocks those men God sent to you. Many times I wanted to help your people! I wanted to gather them together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. But you did not let me. ³⁸Now your home will be left completely empty. ³⁹I tell you, you will not see me again until that time when you will say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

Jesus Talks About the Future Destruction of the Temple

24 Jesus left the temple and was walking away. But his followers came to show him the temple’s buildings. ²Jesus asked, “Do you see all these buildings? I tell you the truth. Every stone will be thrown down to the ground. Not one stone will be left on another.”

³Later, Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives. His followers came to be alone with him. They said, “Tell us when these things will happen. And what will happen to show us that it is time for you to come again and for this age to end?”

⁴Jesus answered: “Be careful that no one fools you. ⁵Many people will come in my name. They will say, ‘I am the Christ.’” And they will fool many people. ⁶You will hear about wars and stories of wars that are coming. But don’t be afraid. These things must happen before the end comes. ⁷Nations will fight against other nations. Kingdoms will fight against other kingdoms. There will be times when there is no food for people to eat. And there will be earthquakes in different places. ⁸These things are like the first pains when something new is about to be born.

⁹“Then men will arrest you and hand you over to be hurt and kill you. They will hate you because you believe in me. ¹⁰At that time, many who believe will lose their faith. They will turn against each other and hate each other. ¹¹Many false prophets will come and cause many people to believe false things. ¹²There will be more and more evil in the world. So most believers will stop showing their love for each other. ¹³But he who stands strong to the end will be saved. ¹⁴The Good News about God’s

^{5a} Or *Messiah*.

kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, to every nation. Then the end will come.

¹⁵“The terrible thing that causes destruction”^a was spoken of through Daniel the prophet. You will see this terrible thing standing in the holy place [the temple].” (You who read this should understand what it means.) ¹⁶“At that time, the people in Judea should run away to the mountains. ¹⁷If a person is on the roof of his house, he must not go down to get anything out of his house. ¹⁸If a person is in the field, he must not go back to get his coat. ¹⁹At that time, it will be hard for women who are pregnant or have nursing babies! ²⁰Pray that it will not be winter or a Sabbath day when you have to run away. ²¹Because at that time there will be more trouble than has ever happened since the beginning of the world. And nothing as bad as that will ever happen again. ²²God has decided to make that terrible time short. If that time were not made short, then no one would go on living. But God will make that time short to help the people he has chosen. ²³At that time, someone might say to you, ‘Look, there is the Christ!’ Or another person might say, ‘There he is!’ But don’t believe them. ²⁴False Christs and false prophets will come and perform great things and miracles. They will do these things to the people God has chosen. They will fool them, if that is possible. ²⁵Now I have warned you about this before it happens.

²⁶“If people tell you, ‘The Christ is in the desert’—don’t go there. If they say, ‘The Christ is in the inner room’—don’t believe it. ²⁷When the Son of Man comes, he will be seen by everyone. It will be like lightning flashing in the sky that can be seen everywhere. ²⁸Wherever there is a dead body, there the vultures will gather.

²⁹“Soon after the trouble of those days,

‘the sun will become dark,

and the moon will not give light.

The stars will fall from the sky,

and everything in the sky will be shaken.” *Isaiah 13:10; 34:4*

³⁰“At that time, there will be something in the sky that shows the Son of Man is coming. All the peoples of the world will cry.

^{15a} Daniel 9:27, 12:11 (cf. Daniel 11:31). ^{23b} Or *Messiah*; also in verse 26.

They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds in the sky. He will come with great power and glory. ³¹He will use a loud trumpet to send his angels all around the earth. They will gather his chosen people from every part of the world.

³²"The fig tree teaches us a lesson: When its branches become soft, and new leaves begin to grow, then you know that summer is near. ³³So also, when you see all these things happening, you will know that the time is near, ready to come. ³⁴I tell you the truth. All these things will happen while the people of this time are still living! ³⁵The whole world, earth and sky, will be destroyed, but the words I have said will never be destroyed!"

Only God Knows When the Time Will Be

³⁶"No one knows when that day or time will be. Even the Son and the angels in heaven don't know. Only the Father knows. ³⁷When the Son of Man comes, it will be the same as what happened during Noah's time. ³⁸In those days before the flood, people were eating and drinking. They were marrying and giving their children to be married. They were still doing those things until the day Noah entered the ark. ³⁹They knew nothing about what was happening. But then the flood came and all those people were destroyed. It will be the same when the Son of Man comes. ⁴⁰Two men will be working together in the field. One man will be taken and the other left. ⁴¹Two women will be grinding grain with a hand mill. One woman will be taken and the other will be left.

⁴²"So always be ready. You don't know the day your Lord will come. ⁴³Remember this: If the owner of the house knew what time a thief was coming, then the owner would be ready for him. The owner would watch and not let the thief enter his house. ⁴⁴So you also must be ready. The Son of Man will come at a time you don't expect him.

⁴⁵"Who is the wise and trusted servant? The master trusts one servant to give the other servants their food at the right time. ⁴⁶When the master comes and finds the servant doing his work, the servant will be very happy. ⁴⁷I tell you the truth. The master will choose that servant to take care of everything the master owns. ⁴⁸But what will happen if the servant is evil and

thinks his master will not come back soon? ⁴⁹Then that servant will begin to beat the other servants. He will feast and get drunk with others like him. ⁵⁰And the master will come when the servant is not ready and is not expecting him. ⁵¹Then the master will punish that servant. He will send him away to be among the hypocrites. There people will cry and grind their teeth."

Story About Ten Girls Waiting for the Bridegroom

25 "At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten girls who went to wait for the bridegroom. They took their lamps with them. ²Five of the girls were foolish and five were wise. ³The five foolish girls took their lamps, but they did not take more oil for the lamps to burn. ⁴The wise girls took their lamps and more oil in jars. ⁵The bridegroom was very late, and all the girls became sleepy and went to sleep.

⁶"At midnight someone cried out, 'The bridegroom is coming! Come and meet him!'

⁷"Then all the girls woke up and got their lamps ready. ⁸But the foolish girls said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil. Our lamps are going out.'

⁹"The wise girls answered, 'No! The oil we have might not be enough for all of us. Go to the people who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.'

¹⁰"So the five foolish girls went to buy oil. While they were gone, the bridegroom came. The girls who were ready went in with the bridegroom to the wedding feast. Then the door was closed.

¹¹"Later the others came back. They called, 'Sir, sir, open the door to let us in.'

¹²"But the bridegroom answered, 'I tell you the truth, I don't know you.'

¹³"So always be ready. You don't know the day or the time."

Story About Three Servants Using Their Master's Money

¹⁴"The kingdom of heaven is like a man who was going to another place for a visit. Before he left, he talked with his servants. The man told them to take care of his things while he was gone. ¹⁵He decided how much each servant would be able

to care for. He gave one servant five bags of money. He gave another servant two bags of money. And he gave a third servant one bag of money. Then the man left. ¹⁶The servant who got five bags went quickly to invest the money. The five bags of money earned five more. ¹⁷It was the same with the servant who had two bags of money. He invested the money and earned two more. ¹⁸But the servant who got one bag of money went out and dug a hole in the ground. Then he hid his master's money in the hole.

¹⁹"After a long time the master came home. He asked the servants what they did with his money. ²⁰The servant who got five bags of money brought five more bags to the master. The servant said, 'Master, you trusted me to care for five bags of money. So I used your five bags to earn five more.'

²¹"The master answered, 'You did well. You are a good servant who can be trusted. You did well with small things. So I will let you care for much greater things. Come and share my happiness with me.'

²²"Then the servant who got two bags of money came to the master. The servant said, 'Master, you gave me two bags of money to care for. So I used your two bags to earn two more.'

²³"The master answered, 'You did well. You are a good servant who can be trusted. You did well with small things. So I will let you care for much greater things. Come and share my happiness with me.'

²⁴"Then the servant who got one bag of money came to the master. The servant said, 'Master, I knew that you were a hard man. You harvest things you did not plant. You gather crops where you did not sow any seed. ²⁵So I was afraid. I went and hid your money in the ground. Here is the bag of money you gave me.'

²⁶"The master answered, 'You are a bad and lazy servant! You say you knew that I harvest things I did not plant, and that I gather crops where I did not sow any seed? ²⁷So you should have put my money in the bank. Then, when I came home, I would get my money back with interest.'

²⁸"Take the bag of money from that servant and give it to the servant who has ten bags of money. ²⁹Everyone who uses what he has will get more. He will have much more than he needs.

But the one who does not use what he has will have everything taken away from him.' ³⁰Then the master said, 'Throw that useless servant outside, into the darkness! There people will cry and grind their teeth.'"

The Son of Man Will Judge All People

³¹"The Son of Man will come again in his great glory, and all his angels will come with him. He will sit on his great throne. ³²All the people of the world will be gathered before him. Then he will separate them into two groups as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³The Son of Man will put the sheep [good people] on his right and the goats [bad people] on his left.

³⁴"Then the King will say to the good people on his right, 'Come. My Father has given you his blessing. Come and receive the kingdom God has prepared for you since the world was made. ³⁵I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink. I was alone and away from home, and you invited me into your house. ³⁶I was without clothes, and you gave me something to wear. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison and you visited me.'

³⁷"Then the good people will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and give you food? When did we see you thirsty and give you something to drink? ³⁸When did we see you alone and away from home and invite you into our house? When did we see you without clothes and give you something to wear? ³⁹When did we see you sick or in prison and care for you?'

⁴⁰"Then the King will answer, 'I tell you the truth. Anything you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you also did for me.'

⁴¹"Then the King will say to those on his left, 'Go away from me. God has said that you will be punished. Go into the fire that burns forever that was prepared for the devil and his helpers. ⁴²I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink. ⁴³I was alone and away from home, and you did not invite me into your house. I was without clothes, and you gave me nothing to wear. I was sick and in prison, and you did not care for me.'

⁴⁴"Then they will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hun-

gry or thirsty? When did we see you alone and away from home? Or when did we see you without clothes or sick or in prison? When did we see these things and not help you?"

⁴⁵"Then the King will answer, 'I tell you the truth. Anything you refused to do for any of my people here, you refused to do for me.'

⁴⁶"These people will go off to be punished forever. But the good people will go to live forever."

The Jewish Leaders Plan to Kill Jesus

26 After Jesus finished saying all these things, he told his followers, ²"You know that the day after tomorrow is the day of the Passover Feast. On that day the Son of Man will be given to his enemies to be killed on a cross."

³Then the leading priests and the older Jewish leaders had a meeting at the palace of the high priest whose name was Caiaphas. ⁴At the meeting, they planned to set a trap to arrest Jesus and kill him. ⁵But they said, "We must not do it during the feast because the people might cause a riot."

A Woman Does Something Special for Jesus

⁶Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper. ⁷While Jesus was there, a woman came to him. She had an alabaster jar filled with expensive perfume. She poured this perfume on Jesus' head while he was eating.

⁸His followers saw the woman do this and were upset. They asked, "Why waste that perfume? ⁹It could be sold for a great deal of money and the money could be given to the poor."

¹⁰But Jesus knew what happened. He said, "Why are you troubling this woman? She did a very beautiful thing for me. ¹¹You will always have the poor with you. But you will not always have me. ¹²This woman poured perfume on my body to prepare me for burial after I die. ¹³I tell you the truth. The Good News will be told to people all over the world. And in every place where it is preached, what this woman has done will be told. And people will remember her."

Judas Becomes an Enemy of Jesus

¹⁴Then one of the 12 followers went to talk to the leading priests. This was the follower named Judas Iscariot. ¹⁵He said,

"I will give Jesus to you. What will you pay me for doing this?" The priests gave Judas 30 silver coins. ¹⁶ After that, Judas waited for the best time to give Jesus to the priests.

Jesus Eats the Passover Feast with His Followers

¹⁷ On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the followers came to Jesus. They said, "We will prepare everything for you to eat the Passover Feast. Where do you want to have the feast?"

¹⁸ Jesus answered, "Go into the city to a certain man. Tell him that the Teacher says, 'The chosen time is near. I will have the Passover Feast with my followers at your house.'" ¹⁹ The followers did what Jesus told them to do, and they prepared the Passover Feast.

²⁰ In the evening Jesus was sitting at the table with his 12 followers. ²¹ They were all eating. Then Jesus said, "I tell you the truth. One of you 12 will give me to my enemies."

²² This made the followers very sad. Each one said to Jesus, "I am not the one. Am I?"

²³ Jesus answered, "The man who has dipped his hand with me into the bowl is the one who will give me to my enemies."

²⁴ The Son of Man must go. The Scriptures say this will happen. But how terrible it will be for the person who gives the Son of Man to his enemies. It would be better for him if he had never been born."

²⁵ Then Judas said to Jesus, "Teacher, surely I am not the one. Am I?" (Judas is the one who would give Jesus to his enemies.)

Jesus answered, "Yes, it is you."

The Lord's Supper

²⁶ While they were eating, Jesus took some bread. He thanked God for it and broke it. Then he gave it to his followers and said, "Take this bread and eat it. This bread is my body."

²⁷ Then Jesus took a cup. He thanked God for it and gave it to the followers. He said, "Every one of you drink this. ²⁸ This is my blood which begins the new agreement. This blood is poured out for many for the forgiveness of their sins. ²⁹ I tell you this: I will not drink of this fruit of the vine again until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

³⁰They sang a hymn. Then they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Jesus Tells His Followers They Will All Leave Him

³¹Jesus told the followers, "Tonight you will give up because of me. It is written:

‘I will kill the shepherd,
and the sheep will run away.’

Zechariah 13:7

³²But after I rise from death, I will go ahead of you into Galilee."

³³Peter said, "All the other followers may give up because of you. But I will never give up."

³⁴Jesus said, "I tell you the truth. Tonight you will say you don't know me. You will say this three times before the rooster crows."

³⁵But Peter said, "I will never say that I don't know you! I will even die with you!" And all the other followers said the same thing.

Jesus Prays Alone

³⁶Then Jesus went with his followers to a place called Gethsemane. He said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." ³⁷He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee with him. Then Jesus began to be very sad and troubled. ³⁸He said to Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, "My soul is full of sorrow to the point of death. Stay here with me and watch."

³⁹Then Jesus walked a little farther away from them. He fell to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, do not give me this cup of suffering. But do what you want, not what I want." ⁴⁰Then Jesus went back to his followers and found them asleep. Jesus said to Peter, "You men could not stay awake with me for one hour? ⁴¹Stay awake and pray for strength against temptation. Your spirit wants to do what is right, but your body is weak."

⁴²Then Jesus went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this painful thing to be taken from me, and if I must do it, then I pray that what you want will be done."

⁴³Then Jesus went back to the followers. Again he found them asleep, for their eyes were very heavy. ⁴⁴So Jesus left them

and went away one more time and prayed. This third time he prayed, he said the same thing.

⁴⁵Then Jesus went back to the followers and said, "You are still sleeping and resting? The time has come for the Son of Man to be given to sinners. ⁴⁶Get up. We must go. Here comes the man who has turned against me."

Jesus Is Arrested

⁴⁷While Jesus was still speaking, Judas came up. Judas was one of the 12 followers. He had many people with him who had been sent from the leading priests and the older leaders of the people. They carried swords and clubs. ⁴⁸The one who gave Jesus to his enemies had planned to give them a signal. He said, "The man I kiss is Jesus. Arrest him." ⁴⁹At once Judas went to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Teacher!" Then Judas kissed him.

⁵⁰Jesus answered, "Friend, do what you came to do."

Then the men came and seized Jesus and arrested him. ⁵¹When that happened, one of Jesus' followers reached for his sword and pulled it out. The follower struck the servant of the high priest with the sword and cut off his ear.

⁵²Jesus said to the man, "Put your sword back in its place. All who use swords will be killed with swords. ⁵³Surely you know I could ask my Father and he would give me more than 12 armies of angels. ⁵⁴But this thing must happen this way so that it will be as the Scriptures say."

⁵⁵Then Jesus said to the crowd, "You came to get me with swords and clubs as if I were a criminal. Every day I sat in the temple teaching. You did not arrest me there. ⁵⁶But all these things have happened so that it will be as the prophets wrote." Then all of Jesus' followers left him and ran away.

Jesus Before the Jewish Leaders

⁵⁷Those men who arrested Jesus led him to the house of Caiaphas, the high priest. The teachers of the law and the older Jewish leaders were gathered there. ⁵⁸Peter followed Jesus but did not go near him. He followed Jesus to the courtyard of the high priest's house where he sat down with the guards to see what would happen to Jesus.

⁵⁹The leading priests and the Jewish council tried to find

something false against Jesus so that they could kill him. ⁶⁰Many people came and told lies about him. But the council could find no real reason to kill Jesus. Then two people came and said, ⁶¹"This man said, 'I can destroy the temple of God and build it again in three days.'"

⁶²Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Don't you have something to say? What about the charges these men bring against you?" ⁶³But Jesus said nothing.

Again the high priest said to Jesus, "You are now under oath. I command you by the power of the living God to tell us the truth. Tell us, are you the Christ,^a the Son of God?"

⁶⁴Jesus answered, "Yes, I am. But I tell you, in the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of God. And you will see him coming on the clouds of heaven."

⁶⁵When the high priest heard this, he tore his clothes and said, "This man has said things that are against God! We don't need any more witnesses. You all heard him say these things against God. ⁶⁶What do you think?"

They answered, "He is guilty, and he must die."

⁶⁷Then the people there spit in Jesus' face and beat him with their fists. Others slapped Jesus. ⁶⁸They said, "Prove to us that you are a prophet, you Christ! Tell us who hit you!"

Peter Is Afraid to Say He Knows Jesus

⁶⁹At that time, Peter was sitting in the courtyard. A servant girl came to him and said, "You were with Jesus, that man from Galilee."

⁷⁰But Peter said that he was never with Jesus. He said this to all the people there. Peter said, "I don't know what you are talking about."

⁷¹Then he left the courtyard. At the gate, another girl saw him. She said to the people there, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth."

⁷²Again, Peter said that he was never with Jesus. He said, "I swear that I don't know this man Jesus!"

⁷³A short time later, some people standing there went to Peter and said, "We know you are one of those men who followed Jesus. We know this because of the way you talk."

^{63a} Or *Messiah*.

⁷⁴Then Peter began to curse. He said, "I swear I don't know this man Jesus!" After Peter said this, a rooster crowed. ⁷⁵Then he remembered what Jesus had told him: "Before the rooster crows, you will say three times that you don't know me." Then Peter went outside and cried bitterly.

Jesus Is Taken to Governor Pilate

27 Early the next morning, all the leading priests and older leaders of the people decided to kill Jesus. ²They tied him, led him away, and turned him over to Pilate, the governor.

Judas Kills Himself

³Judas saw that they had decided to kill Jesus. Judas was the one who gave Jesus to his enemies. When Judas saw what happened, he was very sorry for what he had done. So he took the 30 silver coins back to the priests and the leaders. ⁴Judas said, "I sinned. I gave you an innocent man to be killed."

The leaders answered, "What is that to us? That's your problem, not ours."

⁵So Judas threw the money into the temple. Then he went away and hanged himself.

⁶The leading priests picked up the silver coins in the temple. They said, "Our law does not allow us to keep this money with the temple money. This money has paid for a man's death." ⁷So they decided to use the coins to buy a field called Potter's Field. This field would be a place to bury strangers who died while visiting Jerusalem. ⁸That is why that field is still called the Field of Blood. ⁹So what was said through Jeremiah the prophet came true:

"They took 30 silver coins. That was how much the Jewish people decided to pay for his life. ¹⁰They used those 30 silver coins to buy the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me."^a

Governor Pilate Questions Jesus

¹¹Jesus stood before Pilate the governor. Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?"

Jesus answered, "Yes, I am."

^{10a} See Zechariah 11:12–13 and Jeremiah 32:6–9.

¹²When the leading priests and the older leaders accused Jesus, he said nothing.

¹³So Pilate said to Jesus, "Don't you hear these people accusing you of all these things?"

¹⁴But Jesus said nothing in answer to Pilate. Pilate was very surprised at this.

Pilate Tries but Fails to Free Jesus

¹⁵Every year at the time of Passover the governor would free one person from prison. This was always someone the people wanted to be set free. ¹⁶At that time there was a man in prison who was known to be very bad. His name was Barabbas. ¹⁷All the people gathered at Pilate's house. Pilate said, "Which man do you want me to free: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Christ?" ¹⁸Pilate knew that the people gave Jesus to him because they were jealous.

¹⁹While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent a message to him. The message said, "Don't do anything to that man. He is not guilty. Today I had a dream about him and it troubled me very much."

²⁰But the leading priests and older leaders told the crowd to ask for Barabbas to be freed and for Jesus to be killed.

²¹Pilate said, "I have Barabbas and Jesus. Which do you want me to set free for you?"

The people answered, "Barabbas!"

²²Pilate asked, "What should I do with Jesus, the one called the Christ?"

They all answered, "Kill him on a cross!"

²³Pilate asked, "Why do you want me to kill him? What wrong has he done?"

But they shouted louder, "Kill him on a cross!"

²⁴Pilate saw that he could do nothing about this, and a riot was starting. So he took some water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. Then he said, "I am not guilty of this man's death. You are the ones who are causing it!"

²⁵All the people answered, "We will be responsible. We accept for ourselves and for our children any punishment for his death."

^{17a} Or *Messiah*; also in verse 22.

²⁶Then Pilate freed Barabbas. Pilate told some of the soldiers to beat Jesus with whips. Then he gave Jesus to the soldiers to be killed on a cross.

Pilate's Soldiers Tease Jesus

²⁷Pilate's soldiers took Jesus into the governor's palace. All the soldiers gathered around Jesus. ²⁸They took off his clothes and put a red robe on him. ²⁹Then the soldiers used thorny branches to make a crown. They put this crown of thorns on Jesus' head, and they put a stick in his right hand. Then the soldiers bowed before Jesus and made fun of him. They said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" ³⁰They spit on Jesus. Then they took his stick and hit him on the head many times. ³¹After they finished making fun of Jesus, the soldiers took off the robe and put his own clothes on him again. Then they led Jesus away to be killed on a cross.

Jesus Is Killed on a Cross

³²The soldiers were going out of the city with Jesus. They forced another man to carry the cross to be used for Jesus. This man was Simon, from Cyrene. ³³They all came to the place called Golgotha. (Golgotha means The Place of the Skull.) ³⁴At Golgotha, the soldiers gave Jesus wine mixed with gall^a to drink. He tasted the wine but refused to drink it. ³⁵The soldiers nailed Jesus to a cross. They threw dice to decide who would get his clothes. ³⁶The soldiers sat there and continued watching him. ³⁷They put a sign above Jesus' head with the charge against him written on it. The sign read: "THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS." ³⁸Two robbers were nailed to crosses beside Jesus, one on the right and the other on the left. ³⁹People walked by and insulted Jesus. They shook their heads, ⁴⁰saying, "You said you could destroy the temple and build it again in three days. So save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!"

⁴¹The leading priests, the teachers of the law, and the older Jewish leaders were also there. These men made fun of Jesus ⁴²and said, "He saved other people, but he can't save himself! He is the King of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross.

^{34a} Probably a drink of wine mixed with drugs to help a person feel less pain.

Then we will believe in him. ⁴³He trusts in God. So let God save him now, if God really wants him. He himself said, 'I am the Son of God.'" ⁴⁴And in the same way, the robbers who were being killed on crosses beside Jesus also said cruel things to him.

Jesus Dies

⁴⁵At noon the whole country became dark. This darkness lasted for three hours. ⁴⁶About three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" This means, "My God, my God, why have you left me alone?"

⁴⁷Some of the people standing there heard this. They said, "He is calling Elijah."

⁴⁸Quickly one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled the sponge with vinegar and tied it to a stick. Then he used the stick to give the sponge to Jesus to drink from it. ⁴⁹But the others said, "Don't bother him. We want to see if Elijah will come to save him."

⁵⁰Again Jesus cried out in a loud voice. Then he died.^a

⁵¹Then the curtain in the temple split into two pieces. The tear started at the top and tore all the way down to the bottom. Also, the earth shook and rocks broke apart. ⁵²The graves opened, and many of God's people who had died were raised from death. ⁵³They came out of the graves after Jesus was raised from death. They went into the holy city, and many people saw them.

⁵⁴The army officer and the soldiers guarding Jesus saw this earthquake and everything else that happened. They were very frightened and said, "He really was the Son^b of God!"

⁵⁵Many women were standing at a distance from the cross, watching. These were women who had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for him. ⁵⁶Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons were there.

Jesus Is Buried

⁵⁷That evening a rich man named Joseph came to Jerusalem. He was a follower of Jesus from the town of Arimathea. ⁵⁸Joseph went to Pilate and asked to have Jesus' body. Pilate gave orders

⁵⁰^a Or he let his spirit leave. ⁵⁴^b Or a son.

for the soldiers to give it to Joseph. ⁵⁹Then Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth. ⁶⁰He put Jesus' body in a new tomb that he had cut in a wall of rock. He rolled a large stone to block the entrance of the tomb. Then Joseph went away. ⁶¹Mary Magdalene and the other woman named Mary were sitting near the tomb.

The Tomb of Jesus Is Guarded

⁶²That day was the day called Preparation Day. The next day, the leading priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. ⁶³They said, "Sir, we remember that while that liar was still alive he said, 'After three days I will rise from death.' ⁶⁴So give the order for the tomb to be guarded closely till the third day. His followers might come and steal the body. Then they could tell the people that he has risen from death. That lie would be even worse than the first one."

⁶⁵Pilate said, "Take some soldiers and go guard the tomb the best way you know." ⁶⁶So they all went to the tomb. They sealed the stone in the entrance and then put soldiers there to guard it.

The Followers Learn That Jesus Has Risen from Death

28 The day after the Sabbath day was the first day of the week. At dawn on the first day, Mary Magdalene and another woman named Mary went to look at the tomb.

²At that time there was a strong earthquake. An angel of the Lord came down from heaven and went to the tomb. He rolled the stone away from the entrance and sat on it. ³He was shining as bright as lightning. His clothes were white as snow. ⁴The soldiers guarding the tomb were very frightened of the angel. They shook with fear and then became like dead men.

⁵The angel said to the women, "Don't be afraid. I know that you are looking for Jesus, the one who was killed on the cross. ⁶But he is not here. He has risen from death as he said he would. Come and see the place where his body was. ⁷And go quickly and tell his followers. Say to them: 'Jesus has risen from death. He is going into Galilee and will be there before you. You will see him there.'" Then the angel said, "Now I have told you."

⁸The women left the tomb quickly. They were afraid, but

they were also very happy. They ran to tell Jesus' followers what had happened. ⁹Suddenly, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings." The women came up to Jesus, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. ¹⁰Then Jesus said to them, "Don't be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go on to Galilee. They will see me there."

The Soldiers Tell the Jewish Leaders What Happened

¹¹The women went to tell Jesus' followers. At the same time, some of the soldiers who had been guarding the tomb went into the city. They went to tell the leading priests everything that had happened. ¹²Then the priests met with the older Jewish leaders and made a plan. They paid the soldiers a large amount of money. ¹³They said to the soldiers, "Tell the people that Jesus' followers came during the night and stole the body while you were asleep. ¹⁴If the governor hears about this, we will satisfy him and save you from trouble." ¹⁵So the soldiers kept the money and obeyed the priests. And that story is still spread among the Jews even today.

Jesus Talks to His Followers

¹⁶The 11 followers went to Galilee to the mountain where Jesus told them to go. ¹⁷On the mountain they saw Jesus and worshiped him. But some of them did not believe that it was really Jesus. ¹⁸Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth is given to me. ¹⁹So go and make followers of all people in the world. Baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰Teach them to obey everything that I have told you. You can be sure that I will be with you always. I will continue with you until the end of the age."

Mark

John the Baptist Prepares for the Coming of Jesus

1 This is the beginning of the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.^a ²As the prophet Isaiah wrote:

“I [God] will send my messenger ahead of you.

He will prepare the way for you.

Malachi 3:1

³There is a person shouting in the desert:

‘Prepare the way for the Lord;

make his paths straight.’”

Isaiah 40:3

⁴John was baptizing people in the desert. He preached a baptism of changed hearts and lives for the forgiveness of sins.

⁵All the people from Judea and Jerusalem were going out to John. They told about the sins they had done. Then they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. ⁶John wore clothes made from camel’s hair and had a leather belt around his waist. He ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷This is what John preached to the people: “There is one coming later who is greater than I. I am not good enough even to kneel down and untie his shoes. ⁸I baptize you with water. But the one who is coming will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

Jesus Is Baptized and Goes Away to Be Tempted

⁹At that time Jesus came from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to the place where John was. John baptized Jesus in the Jordan River. ¹⁰When Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven open. The Holy Spirit came down on him like a

^{1a} Some Greek copies omit *the Son of God*.

dove. ¹¹A voice came from heaven and said: "You are my Son and I love you. I am very pleased with you."

¹²Then the Spirit sent Jesus into the desert alone. ¹³He was in the desert 40 days and was there with the wild animals. While he was in the desert, he was tempted by Satan. Then angels came and took care of Jesus.

Jesus Chooses Some Followers

¹⁴After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee and preached the Good News from God. ¹⁵Jesus said, "The right time has come. The kingdom of God is near. Change your hearts and lives and believe the Good News!"

¹⁶When Jesus was walking by Lake Galilee, he saw Simon and Simon's brother, Andrew. They were fishermen and were throwing a net into the lake to catch fish. ¹⁷Jesus said to them, "Come and follow me. I will make you fishermen for men."

¹⁸So Simon and Andrew left their nets and followed him.

¹⁹Jesus continued walking by Lake Galilee. He saw two more brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. They were in their boat, preparing their nets to catch fish. ²⁰Their father Zebedee and the men who worked for him were in the boat with the brothers. When Jesus saw the brothers, he called them to come with him. They left their father and followed Jesus.

Jesus Heals a Man Who Had an Evil Spirit

²¹Jesus and his followers went to Capernaum. On the Sabbath day Jesus went to the synagogue and began to teach. ²²The people there were amazed at his teaching because he did not teach like their teachers of the law. He taught like a person who had authority. ²³While he was in the synagogue, a man was there who had an evil spirit in him. The man shouted, ²⁴"Jesus of Nazareth! What do you want with us? Did you come to destroy us? I know who you are—God's Holy One!"

²⁵Jesus said strongly, "Be quiet! Come out of the man!" ²⁶The evil spirit made the man shake violently. Then the spirit gave a loud cry and came out of him.

²⁷The people were amazed. They asked each other, "What is happening here? This man is teaching something new. And he teaches with authority. He even gives commands to evil spirits,

and they obey him.”²⁸ And the news about Jesus spread quickly everywhere in the area of Galilee.

Jesus Heals Many People

²⁹Jesus and his followers left the synagogue. They all went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew.³⁰ Simon’s mother-in-law was sick in bed with a fever. The people there told Jesus about her.³¹ So Jesus went to her bed, took her hand, and helped her up. The fever left her, and she was healed. Then she began serving them.

³²That night, after the sun went down, the people brought all who were sick to Jesus. They also brought those who had demons in them.³³ The whole town gathered at the door of the house.³⁴ Jesus healed many who had different kinds of sicknesses. He also forced many demons to leave people. But he would not allow the demons to speak, because they knew who he was.

Jesus Prepares to Tell People the Good News

³⁵Early the next morning, Jesus woke and left the house while it was still dark. He went to a place to be alone and pray.³⁶ Later, Simon and his friends went to look for Jesus.³⁷ They found him and said, “Everyone is looking for you!”

³⁸Jesus answered, “We should go somewhere else, to other towns around here. Then I can preach there too. That is the reason I came.”³⁹ So he traveled everywhere in Galilee. He preached in the synagogues and forced demons to leave people.

Jesus Heals a Sick Man

⁴⁰A man who had leprosy came to Jesus. The man fell to his knees and begged Jesus, “I know that you can heal me if you will.”

⁴¹Jesus felt sorry for the man. So he touched him and said, “I want to heal you. Be healed!”⁴² At once the disease left the man, and he was healed.

⁴³Jesus told the man to go. But Jesus warned him strongly,⁴⁴ “Don’t tell anyone about what I did for you. But go and show yourself to the priest. And offer the gift that Moses commanded.”

^{44a} See Leviticus 14:1-32.

This will show the people that you are healed.” ⁴⁵The man left there, but he told everyone he saw that Jesus had healed him. So the news about Jesus spread. This is the reason Jesus could not enter a town if people saw him. He stayed in places where nobody lived, but people came to him from everywhere.

Jesus Heals a Paralyzed Man

2 A few days later, Jesus came back to Capernaum. The news spread that he was home. ²So many people gathered to hear him preach that the house was full. There was no place to stand, not even outside the door. Jesus was teaching them. ³Some people came, bringing a paralyzed man to Jesus. Four of them were carrying the paralyzed man. ⁴But they could not get to Jesus because of the crowd. So they went to the roof above Jesus and made a hole in it. Then they lowered the mat with the paralyzed man on it. ⁵Jesus saw these men had great faith. So he said to the paralyzed man, “Young man, your sins are forgiven.”

⁶Some of the teachers of the law were sitting there. They saw what Jesus did, and they said to themselves, ⁷“Why does this man say things like that? He is saying things that are against God. Only God can forgive sins.”

⁸At once Jesus knew what these teachers of the law were thinking. So he said to them, “Why are you thinking these things? ⁹Which is easier: to tell this paralyzed man, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to tell him, ‘Stand up. Take your mat and walk’? ¹⁰But I will prove to you that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So Jesus said to the paralyzed man, ¹¹“I tell you, stand up. Take your mat and go home.” ¹²The paralyzed man stood up. He took his mat and walked out while everyone was watching him. The people were amazed and praised God. They said, “We have never seen anything like this!”

¹³Jesus went to the lake again. A crowd followed him there, and he taught them. ¹⁴While he was walking beside the lake, he saw a tax collector named Levi, the son of Alphaeus. Levi was sitting in the tax office. Jesus said to him, “Follow me.” And Levi stood up and followed Jesus.

¹⁵Later that day, Jesus ate at Levi's house. There were many tax collectors and "sinners" eating there with Jesus and his followers. Many people like this followed Jesus. ¹⁶The teachers of the law (they were Pharisees) saw Jesus eating with the tax collectors and "sinners." They asked his followers, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

¹⁷Jesus heard this and said to them, "Healthy people don't need a doctor. It is the sick who need a doctor. I did not come to invite good people. I came to invite sinners."

Jesus Is Not Like Other Religious Leaders

¹⁸One day the followers of John and the Pharisees were fasting. Some people came to Jesus and said, "John's followers fast, and the followers of the Pharisees fast. Why don't your followers fast?"

¹⁹Jesus answered, "The friends of the bridegroom are not sad while he is with them. They do not fast while the bridegroom is still there. ²⁰But the time will come when the bridegroom will leave them. Then they will fast.

²¹"When a person sews a patch over a hole on an old coat, he never uses a piece of cloth that is not yet shrunk. If he does, the patch will shrink and pull away from the coat. Then the hole will be worse. ²²Also, no one ever pours new wine into old wine bags. If he does the new wine will break the bags, and the wine will be ruined along with the wine bags. People always put new wine into new wine bags."

Some Jews Criticize Jesus and His Followers

²³On the Sabbath day, Jesus was walking through some grain-fields. His followers were with him and picked some grain. ²⁴The Pharisees saw this and said to Jesus, "Why are your followers doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?"

²⁵Jesus answered, "You have read what David did when he and those with him were hungry and needed food. ²⁶It was during the time of Abiathar the high priest. David went into God's house and ate the bread that was offered to God. The law says that only priests can eat that bread. But David also gave some of the bread to those who were with him."

²⁷Then Jesus said to the Pharisees, "The Sabbath day was made to help people. They were not made to be ruled by the Sabbath day. ²⁸The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

Jesus Heals a Man Who Has a Crippled Hand

3 Another time when Jesus went into a synagogue, a man with a crippled hand was there. ²Some people there wanted to see Jesus do something wrong so they could accuse him. They watched him closely to see if he would heal the man on the Sabbath day.

³Jesus said to the man with the crippled hand, "Stand up here in front of everyone."

⁴Then Jesus asked the people, "Which is right on the Sabbath day: to do good, or to do evil? Is it right to save a life or to destroy one?" But they said nothing to answer him.

⁵Jesus was angry as he looked at the people. But he felt very sad because they were stubborn. Then he said to the man, "Let me see your hand." The man put his hand out for Jesus, and it was healed. ⁶Then the Pharisees left and began making plans with the Herodians about a way to kill Jesus.

Many People Follow Jesus

⁷Jesus left with his followers for the lake. A large crowd from Galilee followed him. ⁸Also many people came from Judea, from Jerusalem, from Idumea, from the lands across the Jordan River, and from the area of Tyre and Sidon. They came because they had heard about all the things Jesus was doing. ⁹Jesus saw the crowds; so he told his followers to get a boat ready for him. He wanted the boat so that the many people would not crowd themselves against him. ¹⁰He had healed many people, and so all the sick were pushing toward him to touch him. ¹¹Some had evil spirits in them. When the evil spirits saw Jesus, they fell down before him and shouted, "You are the Son of God!" ¹²But Jesus strongly commanded the spirits not to tell who he was.

Jesus Chooses His 12 Apostles

¹³Then Jesus went up on a hill and called some men to come to him. These were the men Jesus wanted, and they went up to

him. ¹⁴Jesus chose 12 men and called them apostles.^a He wanted these 12 to be with him, and he wanted to send them to other places to preach. ¹⁵He also wanted them to have the power to force demons out of people. ¹⁶These are the 12 men he chose: Simon (Jesus gave him the name Peter); ¹⁷James and John, the sons of Zebedee (Jesus gave them the name Boanerges, which means “Sons of Thunder”); ¹⁸Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, ¹⁹and Judas Iscariot. Judas is the one who gave Jesus to his enemies.

Some Jewish Leaders Say Jesus Has a Devil in Him

²⁰Then Jesus went back home, but again a crowd gathered. There were so many people that Jesus and his followers could not eat. ²¹His family heard about all these things. They went to get him because people were saying that Jesus was out of his mind.

²²And the teachers of the law from Jerusalem were saying, “Beelzebul [the devil] is living in him [Jesus]! He uses power from the ruler of demons to force demons out.”

²³So Jesus called the people together and used stories to teach them. He said, “Satan will not force his own demons out of people. ²⁴A kingdom that fights against itself cannot continue. ²⁵And a family that is divided cannot continue. ²⁶And if Satan is against himself and fights against his own people, then he cannot continue. And that is the end of Satan. ²⁷If a person wants to enter a strong man’s house and steal his things, first he must tie up the strong man. Then the thief can steal the things from the strong man’s house. ²⁸I tell you the truth. All sins that people do can be forgiven. And all the bad things people say against God can be forgiven. ²⁹But anyone who says bad things against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven. He is guilty of a sin that continues forever.”

³⁰Jesus said this because the teachers of the law said that Jesus had an evil spirit in him.

^{14a} Some Greek copies omit *called them apostles*.

Jesus' Followers Are His True Family

³¹Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. They stood outside and sent someone in to tell him to come out. ³²Many people were sitting around Jesus. They said to him, "Your mother and brothers are waiting for you outside."

³³Jesus asked, "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?" ³⁴Then Jesus looked at those sitting around him. He said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! ³⁵My brother and sister and mother are those who do the things God wants."

Jesus Uses a Story About a Farmer Planting Seed

4 Another time Jesus began teaching by the lake. A great crowd gathered around him. So he got into a boat and went out on the lake. All the crowd stayed on the shore close to the water. ²He used stories to teach them many things. He said, ³"Listen! A farmer went out to plant his seed. ⁴While the farmer was planting, some seed fell by the road. The birds came and ate it. ⁵Some seed fell on rocky ground where there wasn't much dirt. The seed grew very fast there because the ground was not deep. ⁶But when the sun rose, the plants withered. The plants died because they did not have deep roots. ⁷Some other seed fell among thorny weeds. The weeds grew and choked the good plants. So those plants did not make grain. ⁸Some other seed fell on good ground. In the good ground, the seed came up, grew and made a crop of grain. Some plants made 30 times more, some 60 times more, and some 100 times more grain."

⁹Then Jesus said, "You people who hear me, listen!"

Jesus Tells Why He Used Stories

¹⁰Later, when Jesus was alone, the 12 apostles and others around him asked him about the stories.

¹¹Jesus said, "Only you can know the secret truth about the kingdom of God. But to other people I tell everything by using stories. ¹²I do this so that:

"They will look and look, but never really see;
they will listen and listen, but never understand.
If they saw and understood,
they might change and be forgiven.'"

Isaiah 6:9-10

Jesus Explains the Story About the Farmer Planting Seed

¹³Then Jesus said to the followers, “Do you understand this story? If you don’t, then how will you understand any story? ¹⁴The farmer is like a person who plants God’s teaching. ¹⁵Sometimes the teaching falls on the road. This is like some people who hear the teaching of God. But Satan comes and takes away the teaching that was planted in them. ¹⁶Others are like the seed planted on rocky ground. They hear the teaching and quickly accept it with joy. ¹⁷But they don’t allow the teaching to go deep into their lives. They keep the teaching only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the teaching, they quickly give up. ¹⁸Others are like the seed planted among the thorny weeds. They hear the teaching. ¹⁹But then other things come: worries, the love of money, and wanting all kinds of other things. These things stop the teaching from growing. So that teaching does not produce fruit. ²⁰Others are like the seed planted in the good ground. They hear the teaching and accept it. Then they grow and produce fruit—sometimes 30 times more, sometimes 60 times more, and sometimes 100 times more.”

You Must Use What You Have

²¹Then Jesus said to them, “Do you hide a lamp under a bowl or under a bed? No! You put the lamp on a lampstand. ²²Everything that is hidden will be made clear. Every secret thing will be made known. ²³You people who hear me, listen!

²⁴“Think carefully about what you hear. The way you give to others is the way God will give to you. But God will give you more than you give. ²⁵The person who has something will be given more. But the person who does not have much—even what he has will be taken from him.”

Jesus Uses a Story About Seed

²⁶Then Jesus said, “The kingdom of God is like a man who plants seed in the ground. ²⁷The seed comes up and grows night and day, whether the man is asleep or awake. The man does not know how it grows. ²⁸Without any help, the earth produces grain. First the plant grows, then the head, and then

all the grain in the head. ²⁹When the grain is ready, the man cuts it. This is the harvest time."

Jesus Uses a Story About the Mustard Seed

³⁰Then Jesus said, "How can I show you what the kingdom of God is like? What story can I use to explain it? ³¹The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed. The mustard seed is the smallest seed you plant in the ground. ³²But when you plant this seed, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants. It produces large branches. Even the birds can make nests in it and be protected from the sun."

³³Jesus used many stories like these to teach them. He taught them all that they could understand. ³⁴He always used stories to teach them. But when he and his followers were alone together, Jesus explained everything to them.

Jesus Stops a Storm

³⁵That evening, Jesus said to his followers, "Come with me across the lake." ³⁶He and the followers left the people there. They went in the boat that Jesus was already sitting in. There were also other boats with them. ³⁷A very strong wind came up on the lake, so that the waves began coming over the sides and into the boat. It was almost full of water. ³⁸Jesus was at the back of the boat, sleeping with his head on a pillow. The followers went to him and woke him. They said, "Teacher, do you care about us? We will drown!"

³⁹Jesus stood up and commanded the wind and the waves to stop. He said, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind stopped, and the sea became calm.

⁴⁰Jesus said to his followers, "Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

⁴¹The followers were very afraid and asked each other, "What kind of man is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him!"

Jesus Frees a Man from Evil Spirits

5 Jesus and his followers went across the lake to the region of the Gerasene people. ²When Jesus got out of the boat, a man came to him from the caves where dead people were buried. This man, who lived in the caves, had an evil spirit living

in him. ³No one could tie him up, not even with a chain. ⁴Many times people had used chains to tie the man's hands and feet, but he always broke them off. No one was strong enough to control him. ⁵Day and night he would wander around the burial caves and on the hills, screaming and cutting himself with stones.

⁶While Jesus was still far away, the man saw him. He ran to Jesus and knelt down before him. ⁷⁻⁸ Jesus said to the man, "You evil spirit, come out of that man." But the man shouted in a loud voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, promise God that you will not punish me!"

⁹Then Jesus asked the man, "What is your name?"

The man answered, "My name is Legion, because I have many spirits in me." ¹⁰The man begged Jesus again and again not to send the spirits out of that area.

¹¹A large herd of pigs was eating on a hill near there. ¹²The evil spirits begged Jesus, "Send us to the pigs. Let us go into them." ¹³So Jesus allowed them to do this. The evil spirits left the man and went into the pigs. Then the herd of pigs rushed down the hill into the lake and were drowned. There were about 2,000 pigs in that herd.

¹⁴The men in charge of the pigs ran away. They went to the town and to the farms, telling everyone about this. So people went out to see what had happened. ¹⁵They came to Jesus and saw the man who had had the many evil spirits. He was sitting there clothed and in his right mind. The people were frightened. ¹⁶Some people were there who saw what Jesus had done. They told the others what had happened to the man who had the demons living in him. And they also told about the pigs. ¹⁷Then the people began to beg Jesus to leave their area.

¹⁸Jesus was getting ready to leave in the boat. The man who was freed from the demons begged to go with him.

¹⁹But Jesus would not allow him to go. Jesus said, "Go home to your family. Tell them how much the Lord has done for you and how he has had mercy on you." ²⁰So the man left and told the people in the Ten Towns^a about the great things Jesus had done for him. All the people were amazed.

^{20a} Greek, *Decapolis*.

Jesus Gives Life to a Dead Girl and Heals a Sick Woman

²¹Jesus went in the boat back to the other side of the lake. There, a large crowd gathered around him. ²²A ruler from the synagogue, named Jairus, came to that place. Jairus saw Jesus and bowed before him. ²³The ruler begged Jesus again and again, saying, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her. Then she will be healed and will live."

²⁴So Jesus went with the ruler, and many people followed Jesus. They were pushing very close around him.

²⁵A woman was there who had been bleeding for the past 12 years. ²⁶She had suffered very much, and many doctors had tried to help her. She had spent all the money she had, but she was not improving. She was getting worse. ²⁷When the woman heard about Jesus, she followed him in the crowd and touched his coat. ²⁸She thought, "If I can even touch his clothes, that will be enough to heal me." ²⁹When she touched his coat, her bleeding stopped. She could feel in her body that she was healed.

³⁰At once Jesus felt power go out from him. So he stopped and turned around. Then he asked, "Who touched my clothes?"

³¹The followers said, "There are so many people pushing against you! And you ask, 'Who touched me?'"

³²But Jesus continued looking around to see who had touched him. ³³The woman knew that she was healed. So she came and bowed at Jesus' feet. Shaking with fear, she told him the whole story. ³⁴Jesus said to the woman, "Dear woman, you are made well because you believed. Go in peace. You will have no more suffering."

³⁵Jesus was still speaking to her when some men came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler. The men said, "Your daughter is dead. There is now no need to bother the teacher."

³⁶But Jesus paid no attention to what the men said. He said to the synagogue ruler, "Don't be afraid; only believe."

³⁷Jesus let only Peter, James, and John the brother of James go with him to Jairus' house. ³⁸They came to the house of the synagogue ruler, and Jesus found many people there crying loudly. There was much confusion. ³⁹Jesus entered the house and said to the people, "Why are you crying and making so much noise? This child is not dead. She is only asleep." ⁴⁰But they only

laughed at Jesus. He told all the people to leave. Then he took the child's father and mother and his three followers into the child's room with him. ⁴¹He took hold of the girl's hand and said to her, "Talitha, koum!" (This means, "Little girl, I tell you to stand up!") ⁴²The girl stood right up and began walking. (She was 12 years old.) The father and mother and the followers were amazed. ⁴³Jesus gave the father and mother strict orders not to tell people about this. Then he told them to give the girl some food.

Jesus Goes to His Home Town

6 Jesus left there and went back to his home town. His followers went with him. ²On the Sabbath day he taught in the synagogue. Many people heard him and were amazed. They said, "Where did this man get these teachings? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? And where did he get the power to work miracles? ³He is only the carpenter. His mother is Mary. He is the brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon. And his sisters are here with us." The people did not accept Jesus.

⁴Jesus said to them, "A prophet does not receive honor in his own town with his own people and in his own home." ⁵Jesus was not able to work many miracles there. The only miracles he did were to heal some sick people by putting his hands on them. ⁶Jesus was amazed that they had no faith.

Then Jesus went to other villages in that area and taught. ⁷He called the 12 followers together and sent them out in groups of two. He gave them authority over evil spirits. ⁸This is what Jesus told them: "Take nothing for your trip except a walking stick. Take no bread, no bag, and no money in your pockets. ⁹Wear shoes, and take only the clothes you are wearing. ¹⁰When you enter a house, stay there until you leave that place. ¹¹If any town refuses to accept you or its people refuse to listen to you, then leave that town. Shake its dust off your feet. This will be a warning to them."

¹²The followers went out and preached to the people to change their hearts and lives. ¹³The followers forced many demons out and poured olive oil on many sick people and healed them.

Herod Thinks Jesus Is John the Baptist

¹⁴King Herod heard about Jesus, because Jesus was now well known. Some people said, "He is John the Baptist. He is risen from death. That is the reason he can work these miracles."

¹⁵Others said, "He is Elijah."

Other people said, "Jesus is a prophet. He is like the prophets who lived long ago."

¹⁶Herod heard all these things about Jesus. He said, "I killed John by cutting off his head. Now he has been raised from death!"

How John the Baptist Was Killed

¹⁷Herod himself had ordered his soldiers to arrest John, and John was put in prison. Herod did this to please his wife, Herodias. Herodias was the wife of Philip, Herod's brother. But then Herod married her. ¹⁸John told Herod that it was not lawful for him to be married to his brother's wife. ¹⁹So Herodias hated John and wanted to kill him, but she could not because of Herod. ²⁰Herod was afraid to kill John because he knew John was a good and holy man. So Herod protected John. Also, Herod enjoyed listening to John preach. But John's preaching always bothered him.

²¹Then the perfect time came for Herodias to cause John's death. On Herod's birthday, he gave a dinner party for the most important government leaders, the commanders of his army, and the most important people in Galilee. ²²The daughter of Herodias came to the party and danced. When she danced, Herod and the people eating with him were very pleased.

So King Herod said to the girl, "I will give you anything you want." ²³He promised her, "Anything you ask for I will give to you. I will even give you half of my kingdom."

²⁴The girl went to her mother and asked, "What should I ask the king to give me?" Her mother answered, "Ask for the head of John the Baptist."

²⁵Quickly the girl went back to the king. She said to him, "Please give me the head of John the Baptist. Bring it to me now on a platter."

²⁶The king was very sad. But he had promised to give the girl anything she wanted. And the people eating there with him

had heard his promise. So Herod could not refuse the thing she asked for. ²⁷The king sent a soldier to bring John's head. The soldier went and cut off John's head in the prison ²⁸and brought it back on a platter. He gave it to the girl, and the girl gave it to her mother. ²⁹John's followers heard about what happened. So they came and got John's body and put it in a tomb.

Jesus Feeds More than 5,000 People

³⁰The apostles returned. They gathered around Jesus and told him about all the things they had done and taught. ³¹Crowds of people were coming and going. Jesus and his followers did not even have time to eat. He said to them, "Come with me. We will go to a quiet place to be alone. There we will get some rest."

³²So they went away by themselves in a boat to a place where there were no people. ³³But many people saw them leave and recognized them. So people from all the towns ran to the place where Jesus was going. They got there before he arrived. ³⁴When he landed, he saw a great crowd waiting. He felt sorry for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he taught them many things.

³⁵It was now late in the day. So Jesus' followers came to him and said, "No one lives in this place, and it is already very late. ³⁶So send the people away. They need to go to the farms and towns around here to buy some food to eat."

³⁷But Jesus answered, "You give them food to eat."

They said to him, "Should we go and spend 200 silver coins for bread and give it to them to eat?"

³⁸Jesus asked them, "How many loaves of bread do you have now? Go and see."

When they found out, they came to him and said, "We have five loaves and two fish."

³⁹Then Jesus said to the followers, "Tell all the people to sit in groups on the green grass." ⁴⁰So all the people sat in groups of 50 or 100. ⁴¹Jesus took the five loaves and two fish. He looked up to heaven and thanked God for the bread. He divided it and gave it to his followers for them to give to the people. Then he divided the two fish among them all. ⁴²All the people ate and

were satisfied. ⁴³The followers filled 12 baskets with the pieces of bread and fish that were not eaten. ⁴⁴There were about 5,000 men there who ate.

Jesus Walks on the Water

⁴⁵At once Jesus told his followers to get into the boat and go ahead of him to Bethsaida on the other side of the lake. Then he told the people they could go home. ⁴⁶After sending them away, he went into the hills to pray.

⁴⁷That night, the boat was in the middle of the lake. Jesus was alone on the land. ⁴⁸He saw the followers working hard to row the boat because the wind was blowing against them. At some time between three and six o'clock in the morning, Jesus came to them, walking on the water. He continued walking until he was almost past the boat. ⁴⁹But when his followers saw him walking on the water, they thought he was a ghost and cried out. ⁵⁰They all saw him and were terrified. But Jesus spoke to them and said, "Have courage! It is I! Do not be afraid." ⁵¹Then he got into the boat with them, and the wind became calm. The followers were greatly amazed. ⁵²They had seen Jesus make more bread from the five loaves. But they did not understand what it meant. Their minds were closed.

⁵³When they had crossed the lake, they came to shore at Gennesaret. They tied the boat there. ⁵⁴When they got out of the boat, the people saw Jesus and recognized him. ⁵⁵They ran everywhere in that area and brought sick people on mats to every place he went. ⁵⁶He went into towns and cities and farms around that area. And everywhere Jesus went, the people brought the sick to the marketplaces. They begged him to let them just touch the edge of his coat. And all who touched him were healed.

God's Law Is More Important than Rules that People Make

7 Some Pharisees and some teachers of the law came from Jerusalem. They gathered around Jesus. ²They saw that some of Jesus' followers ate food with hands that were not clean. ("Not clean" means that they did not wash their hands in the way the Pharisees said people must.) ³The Pharisees and all the Jews never eat before washing their hands in this special way.

They do this to follow the teaching given to them by their great people who lived before them. ⁴And when the Jews buy something in the market, they never eat it until they wash it in a special way. They also follow other rules of their great people who lived before them. They follow rules about the washing of cups, pitchers, and pots.

⁵The Pharisees and the teachers of the law said to Jesus, "Your followers don't follow the rules given to us by our great people who lived before us. Your followers eat their food with hands that are not clean. Why do they do this?"

⁶Jesus answered, "You are all hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he spoke about you. Isaiah wrote,

"These people say they honor me,
but they don't make me an important
part of their lives.

⁷Their worship of me is worthless.
The things they teach are only rules
that people make.'

Isaiah 29:13

⁸You have stopped following the commands of God. Now you only follow the teachings of men."

⁹Then Jesus said to them: "You think you are clever! You ignore the commands of God so that you can follow your own teachings! ¹⁰Moses said, 'Honor your father and mother.'"^a Then Moses also said, 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be killed.'^b ¹¹But you teach that a person can say to his father or mother, 'I have something I could use to help you. But I will not use it for you. I will give it to God.'^c ¹²You are telling that person that he does not have to do anything for his father or mother. ¹³So you are teaching that it is not important to do what God said. You think that it is more important to follow your own rules, which you teach people. And you do many things like that."

¹⁴Jesus called the people to him again. He said, "Everyone should listen to me and understand what I am saying. ¹⁵There is nothing a person puts into his body that makes him unclean. A person is made unclean by the things that come out of him."^c ¹⁶

¹⁷When Jesus left the people and went inside, his followers

^{10a} Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16. ^{10b} Exodus 21:17. ^{16c} Some Greek copies add verse 16: *You people who hear me, listen!*

asked him about this story. ¹⁸Jesus said, "You still have trouble understanding? Surely you know that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him unclean. ¹⁹Food does not go into a person's mind. Food goes into his stomach. Then that food goes out of his body." (When Jesus said this, he meant that there is no food that is unclean for people to eat.)

²⁰And Jesus said, "The things that come out of a man are the things that make him unclean. ²¹All these evil things begin inside a person, in his mind: evil thoughts, sexual sins, stealing, murder, ²²adultery, selfishness, doing bad things to other people, lying, doing sinful things, jealousy, saying bad things about others, proud boasting, and foolish living. ²³All these evil things come from within a person and make him unclean."

Jesus Helps a Non-Jewish Woman

²⁴Jesus left that place and went to the area around Tyre. He went into a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. But Jesus could not stay hidden. ²⁵A woman heard that he was there. Her little daughter had an evil spirit in her. So the woman came to Jesus and fell at his feet. ²⁶She was not Jewish. She was Greek, born in Phoenicia, in Syria. She begged Jesus to force the demon out of her daughter.

²⁷Jesus told the woman: "It is not right to take the children's bread and give it to the dogs. First let the children eat all they want."

²⁸She answered, "That is true, Lord. But the dogs under the table can eat the pieces of food that the children don't eat."

²⁹Then Jesus said, "That is a very good answer. You may go. The demon has left your daughter."

³⁰The woman went home and found her daughter lying in bed. The demon was gone.

Jesus Heals a Deaf Man

³¹Then Jesus left the area around Tyre. He went through Sidon to Lake Galilee, to the area of the Ten Towns.^a ³²While he was there, some people brought a man to him. This man was deaf and could not talk. The people begged Jesus to put his hand on the man.

^{31a} Greek, *Decapolis*.

³³Jesus led the man away from the crowd, to be alone with him. Jesus put his fingers in the man's ears. Then Jesus spit and touched the man's tongue. ³⁴Jesus looked up to heaven and sighed deeply. He said to the man, "Ephphatha!" (This means, "Be opened.") ³⁵When Jesus did this, the man was able to hear. He was also able to use his tongue, and he spoke clearly.

³⁶Jesus commanded the people not to tell anyone about what happened. But the more he commanded them, the more they told about it. ³⁷They were really amazed. They said, "Jesus does everything well. He makes the deaf hear! And those who can't talk—Jesus makes them able to speak."

Jesus Feeds More than 4,000 People

8 Another time there was a great crowd. They had nothing to eat. So Jesus called his followers to him. He said, ²"I feel sorry for these people. They have been with me for three days, and now they have nothing to eat. ³I cannot send them home hungry. If they leave without eating, they will faint on the way home. Some of them live a long way from here."

⁴Jesus' followers answered, "But we are far away from any towns. Where can we get enough bread to feed all these people?"

⁵Jesus asked, "How many loaves of bread do you have?"

They answered, "We have seven loaves."

⁶Jesus told the people to sit on the ground. Then he took the seven loaves and gave thanks to God. Jesus divided the bread and gave the pieces to his followers. He told them to pass out the bread to the people, and they did so. ⁷They also had a few small fish. Jesus gave thanks for the fish and told his followers to give the fish to the people. ⁸All the people ate and were satisfied. Then the followers filled seven baskets with the pieces of food that were not eaten. ⁹There were about 4,000 men who ate. After they had eaten, Jesus told them to go home. ¹⁰Then he went in a boat with his followers to the area of Dalmanutha.

The Pharisees Ask for a Miracle

¹¹The Pharisees came to Jesus and asked him questions. They wanted to trap him. So they asked Jesus to do a miracle to show that he was from God. ¹²Jesus sighed deeply. He said, "Why do you people ask for a miracle? I tell you the truth. No miracle

will be given to you.” ¹³Then Jesus left the Pharisees. He went in the boat to the other side of the lake.

Jesus Warns Against the Jewish Leaders

¹⁴The followers had only one loaf of bread with them in the boat. They had forgotten to bring more bread. ¹⁵Jesus warned them, “Be careful! Guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod.”

¹⁶Among themselves, his disciples discussed the meaning of this. They said, “He said this because we have no bread.”

¹⁷Jesus knew what his followers were talking about. So he asked them, “Why are you talking about having no bread? You still don’t see or understand? Are your minds closed? ¹⁸Do you have eyes that can’t see? Do you have ears that can’t hear? Remember what I did before, when we did not have enough bread? ¹⁹I divided five loaves of bread for 5,000 people. Remember how many baskets you filled with pieces of food that were not eaten?”

They answered, “We filled 12 baskets.”

²⁰“And remember that I divided seven loaves of bread for 4,000 people. Remember how many baskets you filled with pieces of food that were not eaten?”

They answered, “We filled seven baskets.”

²¹Then Jesus said to them, “And you still don’t understand?”

Jesus Heals a Blind Man In Bethsaida

²²Jesus and his followers came to Bethsaida. Some people brought a blind man to Jesus and begged him to touch the man.

²³So Jesus took the blind man’s hand and led him out of the village. Then he spit on the man’s eyes. He put his hands on the blind man and asked, “Can you see now?”

²⁴The man looked up and said, “Yes, I see people, but they look like trees walking around.”

²⁵Again Jesus put his hands on the man’s eyes. Then the man opened his eyes wide. His eyes were healed, and he was able to see everything clearly. ²⁶Jesus told him to go home, saying, “Don’t go into the town.”

Peter Says that Jesus Is the Christ

²⁷Jesus and his followers went to the towns around Caesarea Philippi. While they were traveling, Jesus asked them, "Who do people say I am?"

²⁸They answered, "Some people say you are John the Baptist. Others say you are Elijah. And others say that you are one of the prophets."

²⁹Then Jesus asked, "Who do you say I am?"

Peter answered, "You are the Christ."

³⁰Jesus ordered his followers, "Don't tell anyone who I am."

³¹Then Jesus began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things. He taught that the Son of Man would not be accepted by the older Jewish leaders, the leading priests, and the teachers of the law. He taught that the Son of Man must be killed and then rise from death after three days. ³²Jesus told them plainly what would happen. Then Peter took Jesus aside and began to criticize him. ³³But Jesus turned and looked at his followers. He criticized Peter and said, "Go away from me, Satan! You don't care about the things of God. You care only about things men think are important."

³⁴Then Jesus called the crowd to him, along with his followers. He said, "If anyone wants to follow me, he must say 'No' to the things he wants. He must accept the cross that is given to him, and he must follow me. ³⁵Whoever wants to save his life^b will lose it. And whoever gives his life for me and for the Good News will save his life. ³⁶It is worth nothing for a person to have the whole world, if he loses his soul. ³⁷A person could never pay enough to buy back his soul. ³⁸The people who live now are living in a sinful and evil time. If anyone is ashamed of me and my teaching, then I^c will be ashamed of him. I will be ashamed of him when I come in the glory of my Father with the holy angels."

9 Then Jesus said to the people, "I tell you the truth. Some of you standing here will see the kingdom of God come with power before you die."

^{29a} Or *Messiah*. ^{35b} The Greek word means either *life* or *soul*; also in verses 36 and 37. ^{38c} Or *the Son of Man*.

Three Followers See Jesus Talking with Moses and Elijah

²Six days later Jesus took Peter, James, and John and went up on a high mountain. They were all alone there. While these followers watched, Jesus was changed. ³His clothes became shining white, whiter than any person could make them. ⁴Then two men appeared, talking with Jesus. The men were Moses and Elijah.

⁵Peter said to Jesus, "Teacher, it is good that we are here. We will put three tents here—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." ⁶Peter did not know what to say, because he and the others were so frightened.

⁷Then a cloud came and covered them. A voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, and I love him. Obey him!"

⁸Then Peter, James, and John looked around, but they saw only Jesus there alone with them.

⁹Jesus and his followers were walking back down the mountain. He commanded them, "Don't tell anyone about the things you saw on the mountain. Wait till the Son of Man rises from death. Then you can tell people what you saw."

¹⁰So the followers obeyed Jesus and said nothing about what they had seen. But they discussed what Jesus meant about rising from death.

¹¹They asked Jesus, "Why do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?"

¹²Jesus answered, "They are right to say that Elijah must come first. Elijah makes all things the way they should be. But why does the Scripture say that the Son of Man will suffer much and that people will treat him as if he were nothing? ¹³I tell you that Elijah has already come. And people did to him whatever they wanted to do. The Scriptures said this would happen to him."

Jesus Heals a Sick Boy

¹⁴Then Jesus, Peter, James, and John went to the other followers. They saw a great crowd around them. The teachers of the law were arguing with them. ¹⁵But when the crowd saw Jesus, they were surprised and ran to welcome him.

¹⁶Jesus asked, "What are you arguing about with the teachers of the law?"

¹⁷A man answered, "Teacher, I brought my son to you. He has a spirit in him that stops him from talking. ¹⁸The spirit attacks him and throws him on the ground. My son foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth, and becomes very stiff. I asked your followers to force the evil spirit out, but they could not."

¹⁹Jesus answered, "You people don't believe! How long must I stay with you? How long must I go on being patient with you? Bring the boy to me!"

²⁰So the followers brought him to Jesus. As soon as the spirit saw Jesus, it attacked the boy. He fell down and rolled on the ground, foaming from his mouth.

²¹Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has this been happening?"

The father answered, "Since he was very young. ²²The spirit often throws him into a fire or into water to kill him. If you can do anything for him, please have pity on us and help us."

²³Jesus said to the father, "You said, 'If you can!' All things are possible for him who believes."

²⁴The father cried out, "I do believe! Help me to believe more!"

²⁵Jesus saw that a crowd was running there to see what was happening. So he spoke to the evil spirit, saying, "You deaf and dumb spirit—I command you to come out of this boy and never enter him again!"

²⁶The spirit screamed and caused the boy to fall on the ground again. Then the spirit came out. The boy looked as if he were dead, and many people said, "He is dead!" ²⁷But Jesus took hold of the boy's hand and helped him to stand up.

²⁸Jesus went into the house, and his followers were alone with him there. They said, "We could not force that evil spirit out. Why?"

²⁹Jesus answered, "That kind of spirit can only be forced out by prayer."

Jesus Talks About His Death

³⁰Then Jesus and his followers left that place and went through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where he was ³¹because he was teaching his followers. He said to them, "The Son of Man will be given to men who will kill him. After three days,

^{29a} Some Greek copies add *and fasting*.

he will rise from death.”³² But the followers did not understand what Jesus meant. And they were afraid to ask.

Jesus Tells His Followers Who Is the Greatest

³³Jesus and his followers went to Capernaum and went into a house there. Then Jesus asked them, “What were you arguing about on the road?”³⁴ But the followers did not answer, because their argument on the road was about which one of them was the greatest.

³⁵Jesus sat down and called the 12 apostles to him. He said, “If anyone wants to be the most important, then he must be last of all and servant of all.”

³⁶Then Jesus took a small child and had him stand among them. He took the child in his arms and said, ³⁷“If anyone accepts children like these in my name, then he is also accepting me. And if he accepts me, then he is also accepting the One who sent me.”

Anyone Not Against Us Is for Us

³⁸Then John said, “Teacher, we saw a man using your name to force demons out of a person. We told him to stop, because he does not belong to our group.”

³⁹Jesus said, “Don’t stop him. Anyone who uses my name to do powerful things will not say evil things about me.”⁴⁰ He who is not against us is with us.⁴¹ I tell you the truth. If anyone helps you by giving you a drink of water because you belong to the Christ,^a then he will truly get his reward.

⁴²“If one of these little children believes in me, and someone causes that child to sin, then it will be very bad for him. It would be better for him to have a large rock tied around his neck and be drowned in the sea.”⁴³ If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to lose part of your body and have life forever than to have two hands and go to hell. In that place the fire never goes out.^{44b} ⁴⁵If your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to lose part of your body and have life forever than to have two feet and be thrown into hell.^{46c} ⁴⁷If your eye causes you to sin, take it out. It is better for you

^{41a} Or *Messiah*. ^{44b} Some Greek copies of Mark add verse 44, which is the same as verse 48.

^{46c} Some Greek copies of Mark add verse 46, which is the same as verse 48.

to have only one eye and have life forever than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell. ⁴⁸In hell the worm does not die; the fire is never stopped. ⁴⁹Every person will be salted with fire.

⁵⁰"Salt is good. But if the salt loses its salty taste, then you cannot make it salty again. So, be full of goodness. And have peace with each other."

Jesus Teaches About Divorce

10 Then Jesus left that place. He went into the area of Judea and across the Jordan River. Again, crowds came to him, and Jesus taught them as he always did.

²Some Pharisees came to Jesus and tried to trick him. They asked, "Is it right for a man to divorce his wife?"

³Jesus answered, "What did Moses command you to do?"

⁴They said, "Moses allowed a man to divorce his wife by writing a certificate of divorce."

⁵Jesus said, "Moses wrote that commandment for you because you refused to accept God's teaching. ⁶But when God made the world, 'God made people male and female.'^a ⁷'This is the reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife.'^b ⁸And the two people will become one body.'^c So the people are not two, but one. ⁹God has joined the two people together. So no one should separate them."

¹⁰Later, the followers and Jesus were in the house. They asked Jesus again about the question of divorce. ¹¹He answered, "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman is guilty of adultery against her. ¹²And the woman who divorces her husband and marries another man is also guilty of adultery."

Jesus Accepts Children

¹³Some people brought their small children to Jesus, so he could touch them. But his followers told the people to stop bringing their children to him. ¹⁴When Jesus saw this, he was displeased. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me. Don't stop them. The kingdom of God belongs to people who are like these little children. ¹⁵I tell you the truth. You must accept the kingdom of God like a little child accepts things, or

^{6a} Genesis 1:27. ^{7b} Some early Greek copies omit *and be joined to his wife*. ^{8c} Genesis 2:24.

you will never enter it.” ¹⁶Then Jesus took the children in his arms. He put his hands on them and blessed them.

A Rich Young Man Asks Jesus a Question

¹⁷Jesus started to leave, but a man ran to him and fell on his knees before Jesus. The man asked, “Good teacher, what must I do to get the life that never ends?”

¹⁸Jesus answered, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. ¹⁹You know the commandments: ‘You must not murder, you must not be guilty of adultery, you must not steal, you must not lie, you must not cheat, you must honor your father and mother. . . .’”

²⁰The man said, “Teacher, I have obeyed all these commandments since I was a boy.”

²¹Jesus looked straight at the man and loved him. Jesus said, “There is still one more thing you need to do. Go and sell everything you have, and give the money to the poor. You will have a reward in heaven. Then come and follow me.”

²²The man was very sad to hear Jesus say this, and he left. The man was sad because he was very rich.

²³Then Jesus looked at his followers and said, “How hard it will be for those who are rich to enter the kingdom of God!”

²⁴The followers were amazed at what Jesus said. But he said again, “My children, it is very hard to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵And it will be very hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God. It would be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle!”

²⁶The followers were even more amazed and said to each other, “Then who can be saved?”

²⁷Jesus looked straight at them and said, “This is something that men cannot do, but God can. God can do all things.”

²⁸Peter said to Jesus, “We left everything to follow you!”

²⁹Jesus said, “I tell you the truth. Everyone who has left his home, brothers, sisters, mother, father, children, or farm for me and for the Good News ³⁰will get a hundred times more than he left. Here in this world he will have more homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and farms. And with those

^{19a} Exodus 20:12-16; Deuteronomy 5:16-20.

things, he will also have persecutions. But in the age that is coming he will have life forever. ³¹Many who have the highest place now will have the lowest place in the future. And those who have the lowest place now will have the highest place in the future."

Jesus Talks Again About His Death

³²Jesus and the people with him were on the road to Jerusalem. Jesus was leading the way. The followers were amazed, but those who followed behind them were afraid. Jesus took the 12 apostles aside and talked with them alone. He told them what would happen in Jerusalem. ³³He said, "We are going to Jerusalem. The Son of Man will be given to the leading priests and teachers of the law. They will say that he must die. They will give him to the non-Jewish people, ³⁴who will laugh at him and spit on him. They will beat him with whips and kill him. But on the third day after his death, he will rise to life again."

James and John Ask Jesus to Do Something Special for Them

³⁵Then James and John, sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus. They said, "Teacher, we want to ask you to do something for us."

³⁶Jesus asked, "What do you want me to do for you?"

³⁷They answered, "You will have glory in your kingdom. Let one of us sit at your right, and let one of us sit at your left."

³⁸Jesus said, "You don't understand what you are asking. Can you accept the kind of suffering that I must suffer? And can you be baptized with the same kind of baptism that I must have?"

³⁹They answered, "Yes, we can!"

Jesus said to them, "You will suffer the same things that I will suffer. And you will be baptized with the same baptism that I must have. ⁴⁰But I cannot choose who will sit at my right or my left. These places are for those for whom they are prepared."

⁴¹The ten followers heard this. They began to be angry with James and John.

⁴²Jesus called all the followers together. He said, "The non-Jewish people have men they call rulers. You know that those

^{38a} Or *drink the cup that I must drink*.

rulers love to show their power over the people. And their important leaders love to use all their authority. ⁴³But it should not be that way among you. If one of you wants to become great, then he must serve you like a servant. ⁴⁴If one of you wants to become the most important, then he must serve all of you like a slave. ⁴⁵In the same way, the Son of Man did not come to be served. He came to serve. The Son of Man came to give his life to save many people."

Jesus Heals a Blind Man

⁴⁶Then they came to the town of Jericho. As Jesus was leaving there with his followers and a large crowd, a blind beggar named Bartimaeus (son of Timaeus) was sitting by the road. ⁴⁷He heard that Jesus from Nazareth was walking by. The blind man cried out, "Jesus, Son of David, please help me!"

⁴⁸Many people criticized the blind man and told him to be quiet. But he shouted more and more, "Son of David, please help me!"

⁴⁹Jesus stopped and said, "Tell the man to come here."

So they called the blind man, saying, "Cheer up! Get to your feet. Jesus is calling you." ⁵⁰He jumped up, threw off his coat and went to Jesus.

⁵¹Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?"

The blind man answered, "Teacher, I want to see again."

⁵²Jesus said, "Go. You are healed because you believed." At once the man was able to see again, and he followed Jesus on the road.

Jesus Enters Jerusalem like a King

11 Jesus and his followers were coming closer to Jerusalem. They came to the towns of Bethphage and Bethany near the Mount of Olives. There Jesus sent two of his followers. ²He said to them, "Go to the town you see there. When you enter it, you will find a colt tied which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here to me. ³If anyone asks you why you are doing this, tell him, 'The Master needs the colt. He will send it back soon.'"

⁴The followers went into the town. They found a colt tied in

the street near the door of a house, and they untied it. ⁵Some people were standing there and asked, "What are you doing? Why are you untying that colt?" ⁶The followers answered the way Jesus told them to answer, and the people let them take the colt.

⁷The followers brought the colt to Jesus. They put their coats on the colt, and Jesus sat on it. ⁸Many people spread their coats on the road. Others cut branches in the fields and spread the branches on the road. ⁹Some of the people were walking ahead of Jesus. Others were following him. All of them were shouting, "Praise^a God!

God bless the one who comes
in the name of the Lord!

Psalm 118:26

¹⁰God bless the kingdom of our father David!
That kingdom is coming!
Praise to God in heaven!"

¹¹Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. When he had looked at everything, and since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the 12 apostles.

¹²The next day, as Jesus was leaving Bethany, he was hungry. ¹³He saw a fig tree in leaf. So he went to the tree to see if it had any figs on it. But he found no figs, only leaves. It was not the right season for figs to grow. ¹⁴So Jesus said to the tree, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." Jesus' followers heard him say this.

Jesus Goes to the Temple

¹⁵Jesus returned to Jerusalem and went into the temple. He began to throw out those who were buying and selling things there. He overturned the tables that belonged to the men who were exchanging different kinds of money. And he turned over the benches of the men who were selling doves. ¹⁶Jesus refused to allow anyone to carry goods through the temple courts. ¹⁷Then Jesus taught the people. He said, "It is written in the Scriptures, 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.'^b But you are changing God's house into a 'hiding place for thieves.'^c"

^{9a} Or *Hosanna*. ^{17b} Isaiah 56:7. ^{17c} Jeremiah 7:11.

¹⁸The leading priests and the teachers of the law heard all this. They began trying to find a way to kill Jesus. They were afraid of him because all the people were amazed at his teaching. ¹⁹That night, Jesus and his followers left the city.

Jesus Shows His Followers the Power of Faith

²⁰The next morning, Jesus was passing by with his followers. They saw the fig tree, and it was dry and dead, even to the roots. ²¹Peter remembered the tree and said to Jesus, "Teacher, look! Yesterday, you condemned the fig tree. Now it is dry and dead!"

²²Jesus answered, "Have faith in God. ²³I tell you the truth. You can say to this mountain, 'Go, mountain, fall into the sea.' And if you have no doubts in your mind and believe that the thing you say will happen, then God will do it for you. ²⁴So I tell you to ask for things in prayer. And if you believe that you have received those things, then they will be yours. ²⁵When you are praying, and you remember that you have something against another person, then forgive him. If you do this, then your Father in heaven will also forgive your sins." ^{26a}

The Jewish Leaders Doubt Jesus' Authority

²⁷Jesus and his followers went again to Jerusalem. As Jesus was walking in the temple, the leading priests, the teachers of the law, and the older Jewish leaders came to him. ²⁸They said to him, "Tell us! What authority do you have to do these things? Who gave you this authority?"

²⁹Jesus answered, "I will ask you one question. You answer it, and then I will tell you whose authority I use to do these things. ³⁰Tell me: When John baptized people, was that from God or from man? Answer me!"

³¹These Jewish leaders talked about Jesus' question. They said to each other, "If we answer, 'John's baptism was from God,' then Jesus will say, 'Then why didn't you believe John?' ³²But can we say, 'From man?'" (These leaders were afraid of the crowd, because everyone believed that John was a prophet.)

^{26a} Some early Greek copies add verse 26: *But if you don't forgive other people, then your Father in heaven will not forgive your sins.*

³³So the leaders answered Jesus, "We don't know."

Jesus said, "Then I will not tell you what authority I use to do these things."

God Sends His Son

12 Jesus used stories to teach the people. He said, "A man planted a field with grapevines. He put a wall around the field and dug a hole for a winepress. Then he built a tower. He leased the field to some farmers and left for a trip. ²Later, it was time for the grapes to be picked. So the man sent a servant to the farmers to get his share of the grapes. ³But the farmers grabbed the servant and beat him. They sent him away with nothing. ⁴Then the man sent another servant. They hit him on the head and showed no respect for him. ⁵So the man sent another servant. They killed this servant. The man sent many other servants. The farmers beat some of them and killed others.

⁶"The man had one person left to send, his son whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, 'The farmers will respect my son.'

⁷"But they said to each other, 'This is the owner's son. This field will be his. If we kill him, then his field will be ours.' ⁸So they took the son, killed him, and threw him out of the field.

⁹"So what will the man who owns the field do? He will go to the field and kill those farmers. Then he will give the field to other farmers. ¹⁰Surely you have read this Scripture:

'The stone that the builders did not want
became the cornerstone.

¹¹The Lord did this,
and it is wonderful to us.'"

Psalm 118:22-23

¹²The Jewish leaders knew that the story was about them. So they wanted to find a way to arrest Jesus, but they were afraid of the people. So the leaders left him and went away.

The Jewish Leaders Try to Trick Jesus

¹³Later, the Jewish leaders sent some Pharisees and some men from the group called Herodians to Jesus. They wanted to trap him saying something wrong. ¹⁴They came to him and said, "Teacher, we know that you are an honest man. You are not

afraid of what other people think about you. All men are the same to you, and you teach the truth about God's way. Tell us: Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar? Should we pay them, or not?"

¹⁵But Jesus knew what these men were really trying to do. He said, "Why are you trying to trap me? Bring me a silver coin, and let me see it." ¹⁶They gave Jesus a coin and he asked, "Whose picture is on the coin? And whose name is written on it?"

They answered, "Caesar's."

¹⁷Then Jesus said to them, "Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. And give to God the things that are God's." The men were amazed at what Jesus said.

Some Sadducees Try to Trick Jesus

¹⁸Then some Sadducees came to Jesus. (Sadducees believe that no person will rise from death.) The Sadducees asked Jesus a question. ¹⁹They said, "Teacher, Moses wrote that if a married man dies and has no children, then his brother must marry the widow. Then they will have children for the dead brother. ²⁰There were seven brothers. The first brother married but died. He had no children. ²¹So the second brother married the widow. But he also died and had no children. The same thing happened with the third brother. ²²All seven brothers married her and died. None of the brothers had any children. The woman was last to die. ²³But all seven brothers had married her. So at the time people rise from death, whose wife will the woman be?"

²⁴Jesus answered, "Why did you make this mistake? Is it because you don't know what the Scriptures say? Or is it because you don't know about the power of God? ²⁵When people rise from death, they will not be married to each other but will be like angels in heaven. ²⁶Surely you have read what God said about people rising from death. In the book in which Moses wrote about the burning bush, it says that God told Moses this: 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.'^a ²⁷God is the God of living people, not dead people. You Sadducees are wrong!"

^{26a} Exodus 3:6.

Which Commandment Is Most Important?

²⁸One of the teachers of the law came to Jesus. He heard Jesus arguing with the Sadducees and the Pharisees. He saw that Jesus gave good answers to their questions. So he asked Jesus, "Which of the commandments is most important?"

²⁹Jesus answered, "The most important commandment is this: 'People of Israel, listen! The Lord our God is the only Lord. ³⁰Love the Lord your God. You must love him with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.'"^a ³¹The second most important commandment is this: 'Love your neighbor as you love yourself.'^b These two commandments are the most important commandments."

³²The man answered, "That was a good answer, Teacher. You were right when you said these things. God is the only Lord, and there is no other God. ³³One must love God with all his heart, all his mind, and all his strength. And one must love his neighbor as he loves himself. These commandments are more important than all the animals and sacrifices we offer to God."

³⁴Jesus saw that the man answered him wisely. So Jesus said to him, "You are close to the kingdom of God." And after that, no one was brave enough to ask Jesus any more questions.

³⁵Jesus was teaching in the temple. He asked, "Why do the teachers of the law say that the Christ^c is the son of David?

³⁶David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit, said:

"The Lord [God] said to my Lord [Christ]:

Sit at my right side,

until I put your enemies under your control."^d

Psalm 110:1

³⁷David himself calls the Christ 'Lord.' So how can the Christ be David's son?" The large crowd listened to Jesus with pleasure.

³⁸Jesus continued teaching. He said, "Beware of the teachers of the law. They like to walk around wearing clothes that look important. And they love for people to show respect to them in the marketplaces. ³⁹They love to have the most important seats in the synagogues and the most important seats at the feasts. ⁴⁰They cheat widows and steal their homes. Then they try to make themselves look good by saying long prayers. God will punish these people severely."

^{30a} Deuteronomy 6:4-5. ^{31b} Leviticus 19:18. ^{35c} Or *Messiah*; also in verse 37. ^{36d} Or *feet*.

A Widow Shows the Meaning of True Giving

⁴¹Jesus sat near the temple money box where people put their gifts. He watched the people put in their money. Many rich people gave large sums of money. ⁴²Then a poor widow came and gave two very small copper coins. These coins were not worth even a penny.

⁴³Jesus called his followers to him. He said, "I tell you the truth. This poor widow gave only two small coins. But she really gave more than all those rich people. ⁴⁴The rich gave only what they did not need. But this woman, who is very poor, gave all she had. She gave all she had to live on."

Jesus Tells About the Future Destruction of the Temple

13 As Jesus was leaving the temple, one of his followers said to him, "Look, Teacher! This temple has beautiful buildings with very big stones."

²Jesus said, "Do you see all these great buildings? Every stone will be thrown to the ground. Not one stone will be left on another."

³Later, Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives. He was alone with Peter, James, John, and Andrew. They could all see the temple. They asked Jesus, ⁴"Tell us, when will all these things happen? And what will show us that the time has come for them to happen?"

⁵Jesus said to them: "Be careful that no one fools you. ⁶Many people will come and use my name. They will say, 'I am the One.' And they will fool many. ⁷You will hear about wars and stories of wars that are coming, but don't be afraid. These things must happen before the end comes. ⁸Nations will fight against other nations. Kingdoms will fight against other kingdoms. There will be times when there is no food for people to eat. And there will be earthquakes in different places. These things are like the first pains when something new is about to be born.

⁹"You must be careful. People will arrest you and take you to court. They will beat you in their synagogues. You will be forced to stand before kings and governors, to tell them about me. This will happen to you because you follow me. ¹⁰But before these things happen, the Good News must be told to all people. ¹¹When you are arrested and judged, don't worry about

what you should say. Say the things God gives you to say at that time. It will not really be you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.

¹²“Brothers will turn against their own brothers and give them to be killed. Fathers will turn against their own children and give them over to be killed. Children will fight against their own parents and cause them to be killed. ¹³All people will hate you because you follow me. But the person who continues to be strong until the end will be saved.

¹⁴“You will see ‘a terrible thing that causes destruction.’^a You will see this thing standing in the place where it should not be.” (You that read this should understand what it means.) “At that time, the people in Judea should run away to the mountains.

¹⁵If a person is on the roof of his house, he must not go down to take anything out of his house. ¹⁶If a person is in the field, he must not go back to get his coat. ¹⁷At that time, it will be hard for women who are pregnant or have nursing babies. ¹⁸Pray that these things will not happen in winter. ¹⁹Because those days will be full of more trouble than there has been since the beginning, when God made the world. And nothing as bad will ever happen again. ²⁰If God had not shortened those days, then no one would go on living. But God will make that time short to help his special people whom he has chosen. ²¹At that time, someone might say to you, ‘Look, there is the Christ!’^b Or another person might say, ‘There he is!’ But don’t believe them. ²²False Christs and false prophets will come and perform great wonders and miracles. They will do these things to try to fool the people God has chosen, if that is possible. ²³So be careful. For I have warned you about all this before it happens.

²⁴“During the days after this trouble comes,

‘The sun will become dark,
and the moon will not give light.

²⁵The stars will fall from the sky,
and everything in the sky will be shaken.’ *Isaiah 13:10; 34:4*

²⁶“Then people will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. ²⁷The Son of Man will send his angels all around the earth. They will gather his chosen people from every part of the earth.

²⁸“The fig tree teaches us a lesson: When its branches become

^{14a} Daniel 9:27; 12:11 (cf. Daniel 11:31). ^{21b} Or *Messiah*.

soft, and new leaves begin to grow, then you know that summer is near. ²⁹So also when you see all these things happening, then you will know that the time is near, ready to come. ³⁰I tell you the truth. All these things will happen while the people of this time are still living. ³¹The whole world, earth and sky, will be destroyed. But the words I have said will never be destroyed.

³²"No one knows when that day or time will be. The Son and the angels in heaven don't know. Only the Father knows. ³³Be careful! Always be ready! You don't know when that time will be. ³⁴It is like a man who goes on a trip. He leaves his house and lets his servants take care of it. He gives each servant a special job to do. One servant has the work of guarding the door. The man tells this servant always to be watchful. This is what I am now telling you. ³⁵You must always be ready. You don't know when the owner of the house will come back. He might come in the afternoon, or at midnight, or in the early morning, or when the sun rises. ³⁶He might come back quickly. If you are always ready, then he will not find you sleeping. ³⁷I tell you this, and I say this to everyone: 'Be ready!'"

The Jewish Leaders Plan to Kill Jesus

14 It was now only two days before the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The leading priests and teachers of the law were trying to find a way to use some trick to arrest Jesus. Then they could kill him. ²But they said, "We cannot arrest Jesus during the feast. The people might cause a riot."

A Woman Does Something Special for Jesus

³Jesus was in Bethany. He was at dinner in the house of Simon the leper. While Jesus was there a woman came to him. She had an alabaster jar filled with very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She opened the jar and poured the perfume on Jesus' head.

⁴Some of those who were there saw this and became angry. They complained to each other, saying, "Why waste that perfume? ⁵It was worth a full year's work. It could be sold and the money could be given to the poor." They spoke to the woman sharply.

⁶Jesus said, "Don't bother the woman. Why are you troubling her? She did a beautiful thing for me. ⁷You will always have the poor with you. You can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. ⁸This woman did the only thing she could do for me. She poured perfume on my body to prepare me for burial. ⁹I tell you the truth. The Good News will be told to people in all the world. And in every place it is preached, what this woman has done will be told. And people will remember her."

¹⁰One of the 12 apostles, Judas Iscariot, went to talk to the leading priests. Judas offered to give Jesus to them. ¹¹The leading priests were delighted about this and they promised to pay Judas money. So he waited for the best time to give Jesus to them.

¹²It was now the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This was a time when the Jews always sacrificed the Passover lambs. Jesus' followers came to him and said, "We will go and prepare everything for the Passover Feast. Where do you want to eat the feast?"

¹³Jesus sent two of his followers, saying, "Go into the city. A man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. ¹⁴He will go into a house. Tell the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks that you show us the room where he and his followers can eat the Passover Feast.' ¹⁵The owner will show you a large room upstairs. This room is ready. Prepare the food for us there."

¹⁶So the followers left and went into the city. Everything happened as Jesus had said. So they prepared the Passover Feast.

¹⁷In the evening, Jesus went to that house with the 12. ¹⁸While they were all eating, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth. One of you will turn against me—one of you eating with me now."

¹⁹The followers were very sad to hear this. Each one said to Jesus, "I am not the one, am I?"

²⁰Jesus answered, "The man who is against me is one of you 12. He is the one who dips his bread into the bowl with me.

²¹The Son of Man must go. The Scriptures say this will happen. But how terrible it will be for the person who gives the Son of Man to his enemies. It would be better for that person if he were never born.

The Lord's Supper

²²While they were eating, Jesus took some bread. He thanked God for it and broke it. Then he gave it to his followers and said, "Take it. This bread is my body."

²³Then Jesus took a cup. He thanked God for it and gave it to the followers. All the followers drank from the cup.

²⁴Then Jesus said, "This is my blood which begins the new agreement. This blood is poured out for many. ²⁵I tell you the truth. I will not drink of this fruit of the vine again until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

²⁶They sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives.

Jesus Tells His Followers that They Will All Leave Him

²⁷Then Jesus told the followers, "You will all give up. It is written:

'I will kill the shepherd,

and the sheep will run away.'

Zechariah 13:7

²⁸But I will rise from death. Then I will go ahead of you into Galilee."

²⁹Peter said, "All the other followers may give up. But I will not."

³⁰Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth. Tonight you will say you don't know me. You will say this three times before the rooster crows twice."

³¹But Peter answered strongly, "I will never say that I don't know you! I will even die with you!" And all the other followers said the same thing.

Jesus Prays Alone

³²Jesus and his followers went to a place called Gethsemane. He said to them, "Sit here while I pray." ³³Jesus told Peter, James, and John to come with him. Then Jesus began to be very sad and troubled. ³⁴He said to them, "My soul is full of sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and watch."

³⁵Jesus walked a few steps away from them. Then he fell on the ground and prayed that, if possible, he would not have this time of suffering. ³⁶He prayed, "Father, dear Father!" You can

^{36a} Or *Abba, Father!*

do all things. Let me not have this cup. But do what you want, not what I want."

³⁷Then Jesus went back to his followers and found them asleep. He said to Peter, "Simon, why are you sleeping? You could not stay awake with me for one hour?" ³⁸Stay awake and pray that you will not be tempted. Your spirit wants to do what is right, but your body is weak."

³⁹Again Jesus went away and prayed the same thing. ⁴⁰Then he went back to the followers. Again he found them asleep for their eyes were very heavy. And they did not know what to say to Jesus.

⁴¹After Jesus prayed a third time, he went back to his followers. He said to them, "You are still sleeping and resting? That's enough! The time has come for the Son of Man to be given to sinful people. ⁴²Stand up! We must go. Here comes the man who has turned against me."

Jesus Is Arrested

⁴³While Jesus was still speaking, Judas came up. He was one of the 12 followers. He had many people with him who had been sent from the leading priests, the teachers of the law, and the older Jewish leaders. Those with Judas had swords and clubs.

⁴⁴The one who gave him to his enemies had planned a signal for them. He had said, "The man I kiss is Jesus. Arrest him and guard him while you lead him away." ⁴⁵So Judas went to Jesus and said, "Teacher!" and kissed him. ⁴⁶Then the men grabbed Jesus and arrested him. ⁴⁷One of the followers standing near drew his sword. He struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear.

⁴⁸Then Jesus said, "You came to get me with swords and clubs as if I were a criminal. ⁴⁹Every day I was with you teaching in the temple. You did not arrest me there. But all these things have happened to make the Scriptures come true." ⁵⁰Then all of Jesus' followers left him and ran away.

⁵¹A young man, wearing only a linen cloth, was following Jesus. The people also grabbed him. ⁵²But the cloth he was wearing came off, and he ran away naked.

Jesus Before the Jewish Leaders

⁵³The people who arrested Jesus led him to the house of the high priest. All the leading priests, the older Jewish leaders, and the teachers of the law were gathered there. ⁵⁴Peter followed far behind and entered the courtyard of the high priest's house. There he sat with the guards, warming himself by the fire.

⁵⁵The leading priests and all the Jewish council tried to find something that Jesus had done wrong, so they could kill him. But the council could find no proof against him. ⁵⁶Many people came and told false things about him. But all said different things—none of them agreed.

⁵⁷Then some men stood up and lied about Jesus. They said, ⁵⁸"We heard this man say, 'I will destroy this temple that men made. And three days later, I will build another temple—a temple not made by men.'" ⁵⁹But even the things these men said did not agree.

⁶⁰Then the high priest stood before them and said to Jesus, "Don't you have something to say? What about the charges these men bring against you?" ⁶¹But Jesus said nothing. He did not answer.

The high priest asked Jesus another question: "Are you the Christ,^a the Son of the blessed God?"

⁶²Jesus answered, "I am. And in the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right side of the Powerful One. And you will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven."

⁶³When the high priest heard this, he tore his clothes and said, "We don't need any more witnesses! ⁶⁴You all heard him say these things against God. What do you think?"

They all said that Jesus was guilty and should be killed. ⁶⁵Some of the people there spit at Jesus. They covered his eyes and hit him with their fists. They said, "Prove that you are a prophet!" Then the guards led Jesus away and beat him.

Peter Is Afraid to Say He Knows Jesus

⁶⁶Peter was still in the courtyard when a servant girl of the high priest came there. ⁶⁷She saw Peter warming himself at the fire and looked closely at him.

^{61a} Or *Messiah*.

Then the girl said, "You were with Jesus, that man from Nazareth."

⁶⁸But Peter said that he was never with Jesus. He said, "I don't know or understand what you are talking about." Then Peter left and went toward the entrance of the courtyard.^a

⁶⁹The servant girl saw Peter there. Again she said to the people who were standing there, "This man is one of them."⁷⁰Again Peter said that it was not true.

A short time later, some people were standing near Peter. They said, "We know you are one of them. You are from Galilee, too."

⁷¹Then Peter began to curse. He said, "I swear that I don't know this man you're talking about!"

⁷²After Peter said this, the rooster crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered what Jesus had told him: "Before the rooster crows twice, you will say three times that you don't know me." When Peter thought about it, he cried.

Governor Pilate Questions Jesus

15 Very early in the morning, the leading priests, the older Jewish leaders, the teachers of the law, and all the Jewish council decided what to do with Jesus. They tied him up, led him away, and turned him over to Pilate.

²Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Yes, that is right."

³The leading priests accused Jesus of many things. ⁴So Pilate asked him another question. He said, "You can see that these people are accusing you of many things. Why don't you answer?"

⁵But Jesus still said nothing. Pilate was very surprised at this.

Pilate Tries but Fails to Free Jesus

⁶Every year at the Passover time the governor would free one person from prison whom the people wanted him to free. ⁷At that time, there was a man named Barabbas in prison. He was a rebel and had committed murder during a riot. ⁸The crowd came to Pilate and asked him to free a prisoner as he always did.

^{68a} Many Greek copies add *And the rooster crowed*.

⁹Pilate asked them, "Do you want me to free the King of the Jews?" ¹⁰Pilate knew that the leading priests had given Jesus to him because they were jealous of Jesus. ¹¹And the leading priests had persuaded the people to ask Pilate to free Barabbas, not Jesus.

¹²Pilate asked the crowd again, "So what should I do with this man you call the King of the Jews?"

¹³They shouted, "Kill him on a cross!"

¹⁴Pilate asked, "Why? What wrong has he done?"

But they shouted louder and louder, "Kill him on a cross!"

¹⁵Pilate wanted to please the crowd, and so he freed Barabbas for them. And Pilate told the soldiers to beat Jesus with whips. Then he gave Jesus to the soldiers to be killed on a cross.

¹⁶Pilate's soldiers took Jesus into the governor's palace (called the Praetorium). They called all the other soldiers together. ¹⁷They put a purple robe on Jesus. Then they used thorny branches to make a crown, and they put it on his head. ¹⁸Then they called out to him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" ¹⁹The soldiers beat Jesus on the head many times with a stick. They also spit on him. Then they made fun of him by bowing on their knees and worshiping him. ²⁰After they finished making fun of him, the soldiers took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him again. Then they led Jesus out of the palace to be killed on a cross.

Jesus Is Killed on a Cross

²¹There was a man from Cyrene coming from the fields to the city. The man was Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus. The soldiers forced Simon to carry the cross for Jesus. ²²They led Jesus to the place called Golgotha. (Golgotha means "The Place of the Skull.") ²³At Golgotha the soldiers tried to give Jesus wine to drink. This wine was mixed with myrrh.^a But he refused to drink it. ²⁴The soldiers nailed Jesus to a cross. Then they divided his clothes among themselves. They threw dice to decide which clothes each soldier would get.

²⁵It was nine o'clock in the morning when they nailed Jesus to the cross. ²⁶There was a sign with the charge against Jesus written on it. The sign read: "THE KING OF THE JEWS." ²⁷They

^{23a} Myrrh was mixed with wine and this was used as a drug to help a person feel less pain.

also put two robbers on crosses beside Jesus, one on the right, and the other on the left. ^{28a} ²⁹People walked by and insulted Jesus. They shook their heads, saying, "You said you could destroy the temple and build it again in three days. ³⁰So save yourself! Come down from that cross!"

³¹The leading priests and the teachers of the law were also there. They made fun of Jesus just as the other people did. They said among themselves, "He saved other people. But he can't save himself. ³²Let the Christ,^b the King of Israel, come down from the cross now. We will see this, and then we will believe in him." The robbers who were being killed on the crosses beside Jesus also insulted him.

Jesus Dies

³³At noon the whole country became dark. This darkness lasted till three o'clock. ³⁴At three o'clock Jesus cried in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani." This means, "My God, my God, why have you left me alone?"

³⁵Some of the people standing there heard this. They said, "Listen! He is calling Elijah."

³⁶One man there ran and got a sponge. He filled the sponge with vinegar and tied it to a stick. Then he used the stick to give the sponge to Jesus to drink from it. The man said, "We should wait now and see if Elijah will come to take him down from the cross."

³⁷Then Jesus cried in a loud voice and died.

³⁸When Jesus died, the curtain in the temple split into two pieces. The tear started at the top and tore all the way to the bottom. ³⁹The army officer who was standing there before the cross saw what happened when Jesus died. The officer said, "This man really was the Son^c of God!"

⁴⁰Some women were standing at a distance from the cross, watching. Some of these women were Mary Magdalene, Salome, and Mary the mother of James and Josés. (James was her youngest son.) ⁴¹These were the women who followed Jesus in Galilee and cared for him. Many other women who had come with Jesus to Jerusalem were also there.

^{28a} Some Greek copies add verse 28: *And the Scripture came true that says, "They put him with criminals."* ^{32b} Or *Messiah*. ^{39c} Or *a son*.

Jesus Is Buried

⁴²This was Preparation Day. (That means the day before the Sabbath day.) It was becoming dark. ⁴³A man named Joseph from Arimathea was brave enough to go to Pilate and ask for Jesus' body. Joseph was an important member of the Jewish council. He was one of the people who wanted the kingdom of God to come. ⁴⁴Pilate was surprised to learn that Jesus was already dead. Pilate called the army officer who guarded Jesus and asked him if Jesus had already died. ⁴⁵The officer told Pilate that Jesus was dead. So Pilate told Joseph he could have the body. ⁴⁶Joseph bought some fine linen cloth, took him down and wrapped him in the linen. Joseph put him in a tomb that was cut in a wall of rock. Then he closed the tomb by rolling a stone to cover the entrance. ⁴⁷And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw the place where Jesus was laid.

The Followers Learn that Jesus Has Risen from Death

16 The day after the Sabbath day, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought some spices to put on Jesus' body. ²Very early on that day, the first day of the week, the women were on their way to the tomb. It was soon after sunrise. ³They said to each other, "There is a stone covering the entrance of the tomb. Who will move the stone for us?"

⁴Then the women looked and saw that the stone was already moved. The stone was very large, but it was moved away from the entrance. ⁵The women entered the tomb and saw a young man wearing a white robe. He was sitting on the right side, and the women were afraid.

⁶But the man said, "Don't be afraid. You are looking for Jesus from Nazareth, the one who was killed on a cross. He has risen from death. He is not here. Look, here is the place they laid him. ⁷Now go and tell his followers and Peter, 'Jesus is going into Galilee. He will be there before you. You will see him there as he told you before.'"

⁸The women were confused and shaking with fear. They left the tomb and ran away. They did not tell anyone about what happened, because they were afraid.^a

^{8a} Some early Greek copies end the book with verse 8.

Some Followers See Jesus

⁹Jesus rose from death early on the first day of the week. He showed himself first to Mary Magdalene. One time in the past, he had forced seven demons to leave Mary. ¹⁰After she saw Jesus, she went and told his followers. They were very sad and were crying. ¹¹But Mary told them that Jesus was alive. She said that she had seen him, but the followers did not believe her.

¹²Later, Jesus showed himself to two of his followers while they were walking in the country. But Jesus did not look the same as before. ¹³These followers went back to the others and told them what had happened. Again, the followers did not believe them.

Jesus Talks to the Apostles

¹⁴Later Jesus showed himself to the 11 followers while they were eating. He criticized them because they had little faith. They were stubborn and refused to believe those who had seen him after he had risen from death.

¹⁵Jesus said to the followers, "Go everywhere in the world. Tell the Good News to everyone. ¹⁶Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved. But he who does not believe will be judged guilty. ¹⁷And those who believe will be able to do these things as proof: They will use my name to force demons out of people. They will speak in languages they never learned. ¹⁸They will pick up snakes without being hurt, and they will drink poison without being hurt. They will touch the sick, and the sick will be healed."

¹⁹After the Lord Jesus said these things to the followers, he was carried up into heaven. There, Jesus sat at the right side of God. ²⁰The followers went everywhere in the world and told the Good News to people. And the Lord helped them. The Lord proved that the Good News they told was true by giving them power to work miracles.

Luke

Luke Writes About the Life of Jesus

1 To Theophilus:

Many have tried to give a history of the things that happened among us. ²They have written what we learned from others—the people who saw those things from the beginning and served God by telling his message. ³I myself studied everything carefully from the beginning, your Excellency. I thought I should write it out for you and put it in order. ⁴I write these things so that you can know that what you have been taught is true.

Zechariah and Elizabeth

⁵During the time Herod ruled Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah. He belonged to Abijah's group. Zechariah's wife was Elizabeth and she came from the family of Aaron. ⁶Zechariah and Elizabeth were truly good people in the sight of God. They did everything the Lord commanded and told people to do. They were without fault in keeping his law. ⁷But Zechariah and Elizabeth had no children. Elizabeth could not have a baby, and both of them were very old.

⁸Zechariah was serving as a priest before God for his group. It was his group's time to serve. ⁹According to the custom of the priests, he was chosen to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰There were a great many people outside praying at the time the incense was offered. ¹¹Then, on the right

side of the incense table, an angel of the Lord came and stood before Zechariah. ¹²When he saw the angel, Zechariah was confused and frightened. ¹³But the angel said to him, "Zechariah, don't be afraid. Your prayer has been heard by God. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give birth to a son, and you will name him John. ¹⁴You will be very happy, and many people will be happy because of his birth. ¹⁵John will be a great man for the Lord. He will never drink wine or liquor. Even at the time John is born, he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶He will help many of the people of Israel return to the Lord their God. ¹⁷He himself will go first before the Lord. John will be powerful in spirit like Elijah. He will make peace between fathers and their children. He will bring those who are not obeying God back to the right way of thinking. He will make people ready for the Lord."

¹⁸Zechariah said to the angel, "How can I know that what you say is true? I am an old man, and my wife is old, too."

¹⁹The angel answered him, "I am Gabriel. I stand before God. God sent me to talk to you and to tell you this good news. ²⁰Now, listen! You will not be able to talk until the day these things happen. You will lose your speech because you did not believe what I told you. But these things will really happen."

²¹Outside, the people were still waiting for Zechariah. They were surprised that he was staying so long in the temple. ²²Then Zechariah came outside, but he could not speak to them. So they knew that he had seen a vision in the temple. He made signs to them but could not speak. ²³When his time of service as a priest was finished, he went home.

²⁴Later, Zechariah's wife, Elizabeth, became pregnant. She did not go out of her house for five months. Elizabeth said, ²⁵"Look what the Lord has done for me! My people were ashamed of me, but now the Lord has taken away that shame."

The Virgin Mary

²⁶⁻²⁷During Elizabeth's sixth month of pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to a virgin who lived in Nazareth, a town in Galilee. She was engaged to marry a man named Joseph from the family of David. Her name was Mary. ²⁸The angel came to her and said, "Greetings! The Lord is with you and wants to bless you."

²⁹But Mary was very confused by what the angel said. Mary wondered, "What does this mean?"

³⁰The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary, because God is pleased with you. ³¹Listen! You will become pregnant. You will give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and people will call him the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of King David, his ancestor. ³³He will rule over the people of Jacob forever. His kingdom will never end."

³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How will this happen? I am a virgin!"

³⁵The angel said to Mary, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will cover you. The baby will be holy. He will be called the Son of God. ³⁶Now listen! Elizabeth, your relative, is very old. But she is also pregnant with a son. She has been pregnant for six months, even though everyone thought she could not have a baby. ³⁷God can do everything!"

³⁸Mary said, "I am the servant girl of the Lord. Let this happen to me as you say!" Then the angel went away.

Mary Visits Zechariah and Elizabeth

³⁹Mary got up and went quickly to a town in the hill country of Judea. ⁴⁰She went to Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the unborn baby inside Elizabeth jumped. Then Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴²She cried out in a loud voice, "God has blessed you more than any other woman. And God has blessed the baby which you will give birth to. ⁴³You are the mother of my Lord, and you have come to me! Why has something so good happened to me? ⁴⁴When I heard your voice, the baby inside me jumped with joy. ⁴⁵You are blessed because you believed what the Lord said to you would really happen."

Mary Praises God

⁴⁶Then Mary said,

⁴⁷"My soul praises the Lord;

my heart is happy because God is my Savior.

⁴⁸I am not important,

but God has shown his care for me,
his servant girl.
From now on, all people will say that I am blessed,
⁴⁹ because the Powerful One
has done great things for me.
His name is holy.
⁵⁰ God will always give mercy
to those who honor him.
⁵¹ God's arm is strong.
He scatters the people who are proud
and think great things about themselves.
⁵² God brings down rulers from their thrones,
and he raises up the humble.
⁵³ God fills the hungry with good things,
but he sends the rich away with nothing.
⁵⁴ God has helped his people Israel who serve him.
He gave them his mercy.
⁵⁵ God has done what he promised to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his children forever."
⁵⁶ Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and
then returned home.

The Birth of John

⁵⁷ When it was time for Elizabeth to give birth, she had a boy.
⁵⁸ Her neighbors and relatives heard how good the Lord was to her, and they rejoiced with her.
⁵⁹ When the baby was eight days old, they came to circumcise him. They wanted to name him Zechariah because this was his father's name. ⁶⁰ But his mother said, "No! He will be named John."
⁶¹ They said to Elizabeth, "But no one in your family has this name!" ⁶² Then they made signs to his father, "What would you like to name him?"
⁶³ Zechariah asked for something to write on. Then he wrote, "His name is John." Everyone was surprised. ⁶⁴ Then Zechariah could talk again, and he began to praise God. ⁶⁵ And all their neighbors became alarmed. In all the hill country of Judea people continued talking about all these things. ⁶⁶ The people

who heard about these things wondered about them. They thought, "What will this child be?" They said this because the Lord was with him.

Zechariah Praises God

⁶⁷Then Zechariah, John's father, was filled with the Holy Spirit. He told the people what would happen:

⁶⁸"Let us thank the Lord God of Israel.

God has come to help his people
and has given them freedom.

⁶⁹God has given us a powerful Savior
from the family of God's servant, David.

⁷⁰God said that he would do this.

He said it through his holy prophets
who lived long ago.

⁷¹God will save us from our enemies
and from the power of all those who hate us.

⁷²God said he would give mercy to our fathers.
And he remembered his holy promise.

⁷³God promised Abraham, our father,
that he would free us from the

⁷⁴power of our enemies,
so that we could serve him without fear.

⁷⁵We will be righteous and holy before God
as long as we live.

⁷⁶"Now you, child, will be called a prophet
of the Most High.

You will go first before the Lord
to prepare the people for his coming.

⁷⁷You will make his people know
that they will be saved.

They will be saved by having
their sins forgiven.

⁷⁸With the loving mercy of our God,
a new Day from heaven will shine upon us.

⁷⁹God will help those who live in darkness,
in the fear of death.

He will guide us in the path that goes toward
peace."

⁸⁰And so the child grew up and became strong in spirit. John lived in the desert until the time when he came out to Israel.

The Birth of Jesus

2 At that time, Augustus Caesar sent an order to all people in the countries that were under Roman rule. The order said that they must list their names in a register. ²This was the first registration taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³And everyone went to their own towns to be registered.

⁴So Joseph left Nazareth, a town in Galilee. He went to the town of Bethlehem in Judea. It was known as the town of David. Joseph went there because he was from the family of David. ⁵He registered with Mary because she was engaged to marry him. (Mary was now pregnant.) ⁶While Joseph and Mary were in Bethlehem, the time came for her to have the baby. ⁷She gave birth to her first son and wrapped him with cloths. She laid him in a box where animals are fed because there were no rooms left in the inn.

Some Shepherds Hear About Jesus

⁸That night, some shepherds were in the fields nearby watching their sheep. ⁹An angel of the Lord stood before them. The glory of the Lord was shining around them, and suddenly they became very frightened. ¹⁰The angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, because I am bringing you some good news. It will be a joy to all the people. ¹¹Today your Savior was born in David's town. He is Christ," the Lord. ¹²This is how you will know him: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a feeding box."

¹³Then a very large group of angels from heaven joined the first angel. All the angels were praising God, saying:

¹⁴"Give glory to God in heaven,
and on earth let there be peace to
the people who please God."

¹⁵Then the angels left the shepherds and went back to heaven. The shepherds said to each other, "Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened. We will see this thing the Lord told us about."

^{11a} Or *Messiah*.

¹⁶So the shepherds went quickly and found Mary and Joseph.
¹⁷And the shepherds saw the baby lying in a feeding box. Then they told what the angels had said about this child. ¹⁸Everyone was amazed when they heard what the shepherds said to them.
¹⁹Mary hid these things in her heart; she continued to think about them. ²⁰Then the shepherds went back to their sheep, praising God and thanking him for everything that they had seen and heard. It was just as the angel had told them.

²¹When the baby was eight days old, he was circumcised, and he was named Jesus. This name had been given by the angel before the baby began to grow inside Mary.

Jesus Is Presented in the Temple

²²The time came for Mary and Joseph to do what the law of Moses taught about being made pure. They took Jesus to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. ²³It is written in the law of the Lord: "When the first boy in every family is born, he shall be called 'special for the Lord.'"
²⁴Mary and Joseph also went to offer a sacrifice, as the law of the Lord says: "You must sacrifice two doves or two young pigeons."^a

Simeon Sees Jesus

²⁵A man named Simeon lived in Jerusalem. He was a good man and very religious. He was waiting for the time when God would help Israel. The Holy Spirit was in him. ²⁶The Holy Spirit told Simeon that he would not die before he saw the Christ^b promised by the Lord. ²⁷The Spirit led Simeon to the temple. Mary and Joseph brought the baby Jesus to the temple to do what the law said they must do. ²⁸Then Simeon took the baby in his arms and thanked God:

²⁹"Now, Lord, you can let me, your servant,
 die in peace as you said.

³⁰I have seen your Salvation with my own eyes.

³¹ You prepared him before all people.

³²He is a light to show your way to the non-Jewish people.

He will bring honor to
 your people, Israel."

^{24a} Leviticus 12:8. ^{26b} Or *Messiah*.

³³Jesus' father and mother were amazed at what Simeon had said about him. ³⁴Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, "Many in Israel will fall and many will rise because of this child. He will be a sign from God that many people will not accept. ³⁵The things they think in secret will be made known. And the things that will happen will make your heart sad, too."

Anna Sees Jesus

³⁶Anna, a prophetess, was there at the temple. She was from the family of Phanuel in the Asher family group. Anna, who was very old, had once been married for seven years. ³⁷Then her husband died and she lived alone. She was now 84 years old. Anna never left the temple but worshiped God by fasting and praying day and night. ³⁸She came at that time. She thanked God and talked about Jesus to all who were waiting for God to free Jerusalem.

Joseph and Mary Return Home

³⁹Joseph and Mary finished doing everything that the law of the Lord commanded. Then they went home to Nazareth, their own town in Galilee. ⁴⁰The little child began to grow up. He became stronger and wiser, and God's blessings were with him.

Jesus As a Boy

⁴¹Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast. ⁴²When Jesus was 12 years old, they went to the feast as they always did. ⁴³When the feast days were over, they went home. The boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know about it. ⁴⁴Joseph and Mary traveled for a whole day. They thought that Jesus was with them in the group. Then they began to look for him among their family and friends, ⁴⁵but they did not find him. So they went back to Jerusalem to look for him there. ⁴⁶After three days they found him. He was sitting in the temple with the religious teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷All who heard him were amazed at his understanding and wise answers. ⁴⁸When Jesus' parents saw him, they were amazed. His mother said to him, "Son, why did you do this to us? Your father and I were very worried about you. We have been looking for you."

⁴⁹Jesus asked, "Why did you have to look for me? You should

have known that I must be where my Father's work is!" ⁵⁰ But they did not understand the meaning of what he said.

⁵¹ Jesus went with them to Nazareth. He obeyed everything his parents told him. His mother was still thinking about all that had happened. ⁵² Jesus continued to learn more and more. He grew taller. People liked him, and he pleased God.

The Preaching of John

3 It was the 15th year of the rule of Tiberius Caesar. These men were under Caesar:

Pontius Pilate, the ruler of Judea;

Herod, the ruler of Galilee;

Philip, Herod's brother, the ruler of Iturea and Trachonitis;

Lysanias, the ruler of Abilene.

² Annas and Caiaphas were the high priests. At this time, a command from God came to John, the son of Zechariah. John was living in the desert. ³ He went all over the area around the Jordan River and preached to the people. He preached a baptism of changed hearts and lives for the forgiveness of sins. ⁴ As it is written in the book of Isaiah the prophet:

"There is a person shouting in the desert:

'Prepare the way for the Lord;

make his paths straight.

⁵ Every valley will be filled up,

and every mountain and hill will be made flat.

Roads with turns will be made straight,

and rough roads will be made smooth.

⁶ Every person will know about

the salvation of God!"

Isaiah 40:3-5

⁷ Crowds of people came to be baptized by John. He said to them, "You poisonous snakes! Who warned you to run away from God's anger that is coming? ⁸ You must do the things that will show that you really have changed your hearts. Don't say, 'Abraham is our father.' I tell you that God can make children for Abraham from these rocks here. ⁹ The ax is now ready to cut down the trees. Every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."

¹⁰ The people asked John, "What should we do?"

¹¹ John answered, "If you have two shirts, share with the per-

son who does not have one. If you have food, share that too."

¹²Even tax collectors came to John to be baptized. They said to John, "Teacher, what should we do?"

¹³John said to them, "Don't take more taxes from people than you have been ordered to take."

¹⁴The soldiers asked John, "What about us? What should we do?"

John said to them, "Don't force people to give you money. Don't lie about them. Be satisfied with the pay you get."

¹⁵All the people were hoping for the Christ^{15a} to come, and they wondered about John. They thought, "Maybe he is the Christ."

¹⁶John answered everyone, "I baptize you with water, but there is one coming later who can do more than I can. I am not good enough to untie his shoes. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. ¹⁷He will come ready to work in the grain. He will put the good part of the grain into his barn. Then he will burn the part that is not good with a fire that cannot be put out." ¹⁸And John continued to preach the Good News, saying many other things to encourage the people.

How John's Work Later Ended

¹⁹(John spoke against Herod, the governor, because of his sin with Herodias, the wife of Herod's brother. John also spoke against Herod for the many other evil things Herod did.) ²⁰So Herod did another evil thing: He put John in prison.

Jesus Is Baptized by John

²¹When all the people were being baptized by John, Jesus also was baptized. While Jesus was praying, heaven opened and ²²the Holy Spirit came down on him. The Spirit was in the form of a dove. Then a voice came from heaven and said, "You are my Son and I love you. I am very pleased with you."

The Family History of Jesus

²³When Jesus began to teach, he was about 30 years old. People thought that Jesus was Joseph's son.

Joseph was the son of Eli.

^{15a} Or *Messiah*.

- ²⁴Eli was the son of Matthat.
Matthat was the son of Levi.
Levi was the son of Melchi.
Melchi was the son of Jannai.
Jannai was the son of Joseph.
- ²⁵Joseph was the son of Mattathias.
Mattathias was the son of Amos.
Amos was the son of Nahum.
Nahum was the son of Esli.
Esli was the son of Naggai.
- ²⁶Naggai was the son of Maath.
Maath was the son of Mattathias.
Mattathias was the son of Semein.
Semein was the son of Josech.
Josech was the son of Joda.
- ²⁷Joda was the son of Joanan.
Joanan was the son of Rhesa.
Rhesa was the son of Zerubbabel.
Zerubbabel was the son of Shealtiel.
Shealtiel was the son of Neri.
- ²⁸Neri was the son of Melchi.
Melchi was the son of Addi.
Addi was the son of Cosam.
Cosam was the son of Elmadam.
Elmadam was the son of Er.
- ²⁹Er was the son of Joshua.
Joshua was the son of Eliezer.
Eliezer was the son of Jorim.
Jorim was the son of Matthat.
Matthat was the son of Levi.
- ³⁰Levi was the son of Simeon.
Simeon was the son of Judah.
Judah was the son of Joseph.
Joseph was the son of Jonam.
Jonam was the son of Eliakim.
- ³¹Eliakim was the son of Melea.
Melea was the son of Menna.
Menna was the son of Mattatha.

Mattatha was the son of Nathan.

Nathan was the son of David.

³²David was the son of Jesse.

Jesse was the son of Obed.

Obed was the son of Boaz.

Boaz was the son of Salmon.

Salmon was the son of Nahshon.

³³Nahshon was the son of Amminadab.

Amminadab was the son of Admin.

Admin was the son of Arni.

Arni was the son of Hezron.

Hezron was the son of Perez.

Perez was the son of Judah.

³⁴Judah was the son of Jacob.

Jacob was the son of Isaac.

Isaac was the son of Abraham.

Abraham was the son of Terah.

Terah was the son of Nahor.

³⁵Nahor was the son of Serug.

Serug was the son of Reu.

Reu was the son of Peleg.

Peleg was the son of Eber.

Eber was the son of Shelah.

³⁶Shelah was the son of Cainan.

Cainan was the son of Arphaxad.

Arphaxad was the son of Shem.

Shem was the son of Noah.

Noah was the son of Lamech.

³⁷Lamech was the son of Methuselah.

Methuselah was the son of Enoch.

Enoch was the son of Jared.

Jared was the son of Mahalaleel.

Mahalaleel was the son of Cainan.

³⁸Cainan was the son of Enos.

Enos was the son of Seth.

Seth was the son of Adam.

Adam was the son of God.

Jesus Is Tempted by the Devil

4 Jesus returned from the Jordan River filled with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit led Jesus into the desert ²where the devil tempted Jesus for 40 days. Jesus ate nothing during that time. When those days were ended, he was very hungry.

³The devil said to Jesus, "If you are the Son of God, tell this rock to become bread."

⁴Jesus answered, "It is written:

'A person does not live only
by eating food.'"

Deuteronomy 8:3

⁵Then the devil took Jesus and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. ⁶The devil said to Jesus, "I will give you all these kingdoms and all their power and glory. It has all been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I wish. ⁷If you worship me, all will be yours."

⁸Jesus answered, "It is written:

'You must worship the Lord your God.
Serve only him!'"

Deuteronomy 6:13

⁹Then the devil led Jesus to Jerusalem and put him on a high place of the temple. He said to Jesus, "If you are the Son of God, jump off! ¹⁰It is written:

'God will command his angels
to take care of you.'

Psalms 91:11

¹¹"Their hands will catch you
so that you will not hurt your foot
on a rock.'"

Psalms 91:12

¹²Jesus answered, "But it also says:

'You must not tempt
the Lord your God.'"

Deuteronomy 6:16

¹³After the devil had tempted Jesus in every way, he went away to wait until a better time.

Jesus Teaches the People

¹⁴Jesus went back to Galilee with the power of the Holy Spirit. News about Jesus spread all through the area. ¹⁵He began to teach in the synagogues, and all the people praised him.

¹⁶Jesus traveled to Nazareth, where he had grown up. On the Sabbath day he went to the synagogue as he always did. Jesus

stood up to read. ¹⁷The book of Isaiah the prophet was given to him. He opened the book and found the place where this is written:

- ¹⁸ “The Spirit of the Lord is in me.
God chose me to tell the Good News
to the poor.
God sent me to tell the prisoners of sin
that they are free,
and to tell the blind that they can see again.
God sent me to free the weak
from their suffering,
¹⁹ and to announce the year for the Lord
to show his kindness.”

Isaiah 61:1-2

²⁰ Jesus closed the book, gave it back, and sat down. Everyone in the synagogue was watching Jesus closely. ²¹ He began to speak to them, saying, “While you heard these words just now, they were coming true!”

²² All the people praised Jesus and were amazed at the beautiful words he spoke. They asked, “Isn’t this Joseph’s son?”

²³ Jesus said to them, “I know that you will tell me the old saying: ‘Doctor, heal yourself.’ You want to say, ‘We heard about the things you did in Capernaum. Do those things here in your own town!’” ²⁴ Then Jesus said, “I tell you the truth. A prophet is not accepted in his own town. ²⁵ What I say is true. During the time of Elijah it did not rain in Israel for three and a half years. There was no food anywhere in the whole country. And there were many widows in Israel during that time. ²⁶ But Elijah was sent to none of those widows. He was sent only to a widow in Zarephath, a town in Sidon. ²⁷ And there were many with leprosy living in Israel during the time of the prophet Elisha. But not one of them was healed, except Naaman, who was from the country of Syria.”

²⁸ When all the people in the synagogue heard these things, they became very angry. ²⁹ They got up and forced Jesus out of town. The town was built on a hill. They took Jesus to the edge of the hill and wanted to throw him off. ³⁰ But Jesus walked through the crowd and went on his way.

Jesus Heals a Man Who Has an Evil Spirit

³¹Jesus went to Capernaum, a city in Galilee. On the Sabbath day, he taught the people. ³²They were amazed at his teaching because he spoke with authority. ³³In the synagogue there was a man who had an evil spirit from the devil inside him. The man shouted in a loud voice, ³⁴"Jesus of Nazareth! What do you want with us? Did you come here to destroy us? I know who you are—God's Holy One!" ³⁵But Jesus warned the evil spirit to stop. He said, "Be quiet! Come out of the man!" The evil spirit threw the man down to the ground before all the people. Then the evil spirit left the man and did not hurt him.

³⁶The people were amazed. They said to each other, "What does this mean? With authority and power he commands evil spirits and they come out." ³⁷And so the news about Jesus spread to every place in the whole area.

Jesus Heals a Woman

³⁸Jesus left the synagogue and went to Simon's house. Simon's mother-in-law was very sick with a high fever. They asked Jesus to do something to help her. ³⁹He stood very close to her and commanded the sickness to leave. The sickness left her, and she got up and began serving them.

Jesus Heals Many Other People

⁴⁰When the sun went down, the people brought their sick to Jesus. They had many different diseases. Jesus put his hands on each sick person and healed every one of them. ⁴¹Demons came out of many people. The demons would shout, "You are the Son of God." But Jesus gave a strong command for the demons not to speak because they knew he was the Christ.^a

Jesus Goes to Other Towns

⁴²At daybreak, Jesus went to a place to be alone, but the people looked for him. When they found him, they tried to keep him from leaving. ⁴³But Jesus said to them, "I must tell the Good News about God's kingdom to other towns, too. This is why I was sent."

⁴⁴Then Jesus kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

^{41a} Or *Messiah*.

Peter, James, and John Follow Jesus

5 One day Jesus was standing by Lake Gennesaret [Galilee]. Many people were pressing all around him to hear the word of God. ²Jesus saw two boats at the shore of the lake. The fishermen were washing their nets. ³Jesus got into one of the boats, the one which belonged to Simon. Jesus asked Simon to push off a little from the land. Then Jesus sat down in the boat and continued to teach the people on the shore.

⁴When Jesus had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Take the boat into deep water. If you will put your nets in the water, you will catch some fish."

⁵Simon answered, "Master, we worked hard all night trying to catch fish, but we caught nothing. But you say to put the nets in the water; so I will." ⁶When they did this, they caught so many fish that the nets began to break. ⁷They called to their friends in the other boat to come and help them. The friends came, and both boats were filled so full that they were almost sinking.

⁸⁻⁹The fishermen were all amazed at the many fish they caught. When Simon Peter saw what had happened, he bowed down before Jesus and said, "Go away from me, Lord. I am a sinful man!" ¹⁰James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were amazed too. (James and John were Simon's partners.)

Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid. From now on you will be fishermen for men." ¹¹When the men brought their boats to the shore, they left everything and followed Jesus.

Jesus Heals a Sick Man

¹²One time Jesus was in a town where a very sick man lived. He was covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he bowed before Jesus and begged him, "Lord, heal me. I know you can if you want to."

¹³Jesus said, "I want to. Be healed!" Jesus touched the man, and immediately the leprosy disappeared. ¹⁴Then Jesus said, "Don't tell anyone about what happened. But go show yourself to the priest. And offer a gift to God for your healing as Moses commanded. This will prove to everyone that you are now healed."

¹⁵But the news about Jesus was spreading more and more.

Many people came to hear Jesus and to be healed of their sicknesses. ¹⁶But Jesus often slipped away to other places to be alone, so that he could pray.

Jesus Heals a Paralyzed Man

¹⁷One day Jesus was teaching the people. The Pharisees and teachers of the law were there, too. They had come from every town in Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem. The Lord was giving Jesus the power to heal people. ¹⁸There was a man who was paralyzed. Some men were carrying him on a mat. They tried to bring him in and put him down before Jesus. ¹⁹But because there were so many people there, they could not find a way to Jesus. So the men went up on the roof and made a hole in the ceiling. They lowered the mat so that the paralyzed man was lying right before Jesus. ²⁰When Jesus saw that these men believed, he said to the sick man, "Friend, your sins are forgiven."

²¹The Jewish teachers of the law and the Pharisees thought to themselves, "Who is this man? He is saying things that are against God! Only God can forgive sins."

²²But Jesus knew what they were thinking. He said, "Why do you have thoughts like that in your hearts? ²³Which is easier: to tell this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to tell him, 'Stand up and walk'? ²⁴But I will prove to you that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, stand up! Take your mat and go home."

²⁵Then the man stood up before the people there. He picked up his mat and went home, praising God. ²⁶All the people were fully amazed and began to praise God. They were filled with much respect and said, "Today we have seen amazing things!"

Levi Follows Jesus

²⁷After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting in the tax office. Jesus said to him, "Follow me!" ²⁸Levi got up, left everything, and followed Jesus.

²⁹Then Levi gave a big dinner for Jesus. The dinner was at Levi's house. At the table there were many tax collectors and other people, too. ³⁰But the Pharisees and the men who taught

the law for the Pharisees began to complain to the followers of Jesus, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and 'sinners'?"

³¹Jesus answered them, "Healthy people don't need a doctor. It is the sick who need a doctor. ³²I have not come to invite good people. I have come to invite sinners to change their hearts and lives!"

Jesus Answers a Question About Fasting

³³They said to Jesus, "John's followers often fast and pray, just as the Pharisees do. But your followers eat and drink all the time."

³⁴Jesus said to them, "You cannot make the friends of the bridegroom fast while he is still with them. ³⁵But the time will come when he will be taken away from them. Then his friends will fast."

³⁶Jesus told them this story: "No one takes cloth off a new coat to cover a hole in an old coat. If he does, he ruins the new coat, and the cloth from the new coat will not be the same as the old cloth. ³⁷People never pour new wine into old wine bags. If they do, the new wine will break the bags, and the wine will spill out. Then the wine bags will be ruined. ³⁸People always put new wine into new wine bags. ³⁹No one after drinking old wine wants new wine because he says, 'The old wine is better.'"

Jesus Is Lord over the Sabbath Day

6 One Sabbath day Jesus was walking through some grain fields. His followers picked the heads of grain, rubbed them in their hands, and ate them. ²Some Pharisees said, "Why are you doing that? It is against the law to do that on the Sabbath day."

³Jesus answered, "Haven't you read about what David did when he and those with him were hungry? ⁴He went into God's house, took the bread that was offered to God, and ate it. And he gave some of the bread to the people with him. This was against the law. It says that only priests can eat that bread." ⁵Then Jesus said to the Pharisees, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath day."

Jesus Heals a Man on the Sabbath Day

⁶On another Sabbath day Jesus went into the synagogue and was teaching. A man with a crippled right hand was there. ⁷The teachers of the law and the Pharisees were watching to see if Jesus would heal on the Sabbath day. They wanted to see Jesus do something wrong so that they could accuse him. ⁸But he knew what they were thinking. He said to the man with the crippled hand, "Get up and stand before these people." The man got up and stood there. ⁹Then Jesus said to them, "I ask you, which is it right to do on the Sabbath day: to do good, or to do evil? Is it right to save a life or to destroy one?" ¹⁰Jesus looked around at all of them. He said to the man, "Let me see your hand." The man stretched out his hand, and it was completely healed. ¹¹The Pharisees and the teachers of the law became very angry. They said to each other, "What can we do to Jesus?"

Jesus Chooses His 12 Apostles

¹²At that time Jesus went off to a mountain to pray. He stayed there all night praying to God. ¹³The next morning, Jesus called his followers to him. He chose 12 of them, whom he named "apostles." They were ¹⁴Simon (Jesus named him Peter) and Andrew, Peter's brother; James and John, Philip and Bartholomew; ¹⁵Matthew, Thomas, James (the son of Alphaeus), and Simon (called the Zealot), ¹⁶Judas (the son of James) and Judas Iscariot. This Judas was the one who gave Jesus to his enemies.

Jesus Teaches the People and Heals Them

¹⁷Jesus and the apostles came down from the mountain. Jesus stood on level ground where there was a large group of his followers. Also, there were many people from all around Judea, Jerusalem, and the seacoast cities of Tyre and Sidon. ¹⁸They all came to hear Jesus teach and to be healed of their sicknesses. He healed those who were troubled by evil spirits. ¹⁹All the people were trying to touch Jesus, because power was coming from him and healing them all!

²⁰Jesus looked at his followers and said,
"Poor people, you are blessed,
because God's kingdom belongs to you."

²¹ You people who are now hungry are blessed,
because you will be satisfied.

You people who are now crying are blessed,
because you will laugh.

²² "You are blessed when people hate you and are cruel to you. You are blessed when they say that you are evil because you belong to the Son of Man. ²³ At that time be full of joy, because you have a great reward in heaven. Their fathers were cruel to the prophets in the same way these people are cruel to you.

²⁴ "But how terrible it will be
for you who are rich,
because you have had your easy life.

²⁵ How terrible it will be for you
who are full now,
because you will be hungry.
How terrible it will be for you
who are laughing now,
because you will be sad and cry.

²⁶ "How terrible when all people say only good things about you. Their fathers always said good things about the false prophets."

Love Your Enemies

²⁷ "I say to you who are listening to me, love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. ²⁸ Ask God to bless those who curse you. Pray for those who persecute you. ²⁹ If someone slaps you on your cheek, let him slap the other cheek too. If someone takes your coat, do not stop him from taking your shirt also. ³⁰ Give to everyone who asks you. When a person takes something that is yours, don't ask for it back. ³¹ Do for others what you want them to do for you. ³² If you love only those who love you, should you get some special praise for doing that? No! Even sinners love the people who love them! ³³ If you do good only to those who do good to you, should you get some special praise for doing that? No! Even sinners do that! ³⁴ If you lend things to others, always hoping to get something back, should you get some special praise for that? No! Even sinners lend to other sinners so that they can get back the same amount! ³⁵ So

love your enemies. Do good to them, and lend to them without hoping to get anything back. If you do these things, you will have a great reward. You will be sons of the Most High because God is kind even to people who are ungrateful and full of sin.
³⁶Show mercy just as your father shows mercy."

Look at Yourself

³⁷"Don't judge others, and you will not be judged. Don't condemn others, and you will not be condemned. Forgive other people, and you will be forgiven. ³⁸Give, and you will receive. You will be given much. It will be poured into your hands—more than you can hold. You will be given so much that it will spill into your lap. The way you give to others is the way God will give to you."

³⁹Jesus told them this story: "Can a blind man lead another blind man? No! Both of them will fall into a ditch. ⁴⁰A student is not better than his teacher. But when the student has fully learned all that he has been taught, then he will be like his teacher.

⁴¹"Why do you notice the little piece of dust that is in your brother's eye, but you don't see the big piece of wood that is in your own eye? ⁴²You say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take that little piece of dust out of your eye.' Why do you say this? You cannot see that big piece of wood in your own eye! You are a hypocrite! First, take the piece of wood out of your own eye. Then you will see clearly to take the dust out of your brother's eye."

Two Kinds of Fruit

⁴³"A good tree does not produce bad fruit. Also, a bad tree does not produce good fruit. ⁴⁴Each tree is known by its fruit. People don't gather figs from thorn bushes. And they don't get grapes from bushes. ⁴⁵A good person has good things saved up in his heart, and so he brings good things out of his heart. But an evil person has evil things saved up in his heart. So he brings out evil things. A person speaks the things that are in his heart."

Two Kinds of People

⁴⁶“Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ but do not do what I say? ⁴⁷Everyone who comes to me and listens to my words and obeys ⁴⁸is like a man building a house. He digs deep and lays his foundation on rock. The floods come, and the water tries to wash the house away. But the flood cannot move the house, because the house was built well. ⁴⁹But the one who hears my words and does not obey is like a man who builds his house on the ground without a foundation. When the floods come, the house quickly falls down. And that house is completely destroyed.”

Jesus Heals a Servant

7 When Jesus finished saying all these things to the people, he went to Capernaum. ²In Capernaum there was an army officer. He had a servant who was so sick he was nearly dead. The officer loved the servant very much. ³When the officer heard about Jesus, he sent some older Jewish leaders to him. The officer wanted the leaders to ask Jesus to come and heal his servant. ⁴The men went to Jesus and begged him saying, “This officer is worthy of your help. ⁵He loves our people and he built us a synagogue.”

⁶So Jesus went with the men. He was getting near the officer’s house when the officer sent friends to say, “Lord, you don’t need to come into my house. I am not good enough for you to be under my roof. ⁷That is why I did not come to you myself. You only need to say the word and my servant will be healed. ⁸I, too, am a man under the authority of other men. And I have soldiers under my authority. I tell one soldier, ‘Go,’ and he goes. And I tell another soldier, ‘Come,’ and he comes. And I say to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and my servant obeys me.”

⁹When Jesus heard this, he was amazed. He turned to the crowd following him and said, “I tell you, this is the greatest faith I have seen anywhere, even in Israel.”

¹⁰The men who had been sent to Jesus went back to the house. There they found that the servant was healed.

Jesus Brings a Man Back to Life

¹¹The next day Jesus went to a town called Nain. His followers and a large crowd were traveling with him. ¹²When he came near the town gate, he saw a funeral. A mother, who was a widow, had lost her only son. A large crowd from the town was with the mother while her son was being carried out. ¹³When the Lord saw her, he felt very sorry for her. Jesus said to her, "Don't cry." ¹⁴He went up to the coffin and touched it. The men who were carrying it stopped. Jesus said, "Young man, I tell you, get up!" ¹⁵And the son sat up and began to talk. Then Jesus gave him back to his mother.

¹⁶All the people were amazed and began praising God. They said, "A great prophet has come to us! God is taking care of his people."

¹⁷This news about Jesus spread through all Judea and into all the places around there.

John Asks a Question

¹⁸John's followers told him about all these things. He called for two of his followers. ¹⁹He sent them to the Lord to ask, "Are you the One who is coming, or should we wait for another?"

²⁰So the men came to Jesus. They said, "John the Baptist sent us to you with this question: 'Are you the One who is coming, or should we wait for another?'"

²¹At that time, Jesus healed many people of their sicknesses, diseases, and evil spirits. He healed many blind people so that they could see again. ²²Then Jesus said to John's followers, "Go tell John the things that you saw and heard here. The blind can see. The crippled can walk. People with leprosy are healed. The deaf can hear, and the dead are given life. And the Good News is given to the poor. ²³The person who does not give up is blessed!"

²⁴When John's followers left, Jesus began to tell the people about John: "What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed blown by the wind? ²⁵What did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No. People who have fine clothes and luxury live in kings' palaces. ²⁶But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, and I tell you, John is more than a prophet.

²⁷This was written about John:

‘Listen, I send my messenger
ahead of you.

He will prepare the way for you.’

Malachi 3:1

²⁸I tell you, John is greater than any other man ever born. But even the least important person in the kingdom of God is greater than John.”

²⁹(When the people heard this, they all agreed that God’s teaching was good. Even the tax collectors agreed. These were people who were already baptized by John. ³⁰But the Pharisees and teachers of the law refused to accept God’s plan for themselves; they did not let John baptize them.)

³¹Then Jesus said, “To what shall I compare the people of this time? What are they like? ³²They are like children sitting in the marketplace. One group of children calls to the other group and says,

‘We played music for you, but you did not dance.

We sang a sad song, but you did not cry.’

³³John the Baptist came and did not eat bread or drink wine. And you say, ‘He has a demon in him.’ ³⁴The Son of Man came eating and drinking. And you say, ‘Look at him! He eats too much and drinks too much wine! He is a friend of the tax collectors and “sinners”!’ ³⁵But wisdom is shown to be right by the things it does.”

Simon the Pharisee

³⁶One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him. Jesus went into the Pharisee’s house and sat at the table. ³⁷A sinful woman in the town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee’s house. So she brought an alabaster jar of perfume. ³⁸She stood at Jesus’ feet, crying, and began to wash his feet with her tears. She dried his feet with her hair, kissed them many times and rubbed them with the perfume. ³⁹The Pharisee who asked Jesus to come to his house saw this. He thought to himself, “If Jesus were a prophet, he would know that the woman who is touching him is a sinner!”

⁴⁰Jesus said to the Pharisee, “Simon, I have something to say to you.”

Simon said, “Teacher, tell me.”

⁴¹Jesus said, “There were two men. Both men owed money to

the same banker. One man owed the banker 500 silver coins. The other man owed the banker 50 silver coins. ⁴²The men had no money; so they could not pay their debt. But the banker told the men that they did not have to pay him. Which one of the two men will love the banker more?"

⁴³Simon answered, "I think it would be the one who owed him the most money."

Jesus said to Simon, "You are right." ⁴⁴Then Jesus turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? When I came into your house, you gave me no water for my feet. But she washed my feet with her tears and dried my feet with her hair. ⁴⁵You did not kiss me, but she has been kissing my feet since I came in! ⁴⁶You did not rub my head with oil, but she rubbed my feet with perfume. ⁴⁷I tell you that her many sins are forgiven. This is clear because she showed great love. But the person who has only a little to be forgiven will feel only a little love."

⁴⁸Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

⁴⁹The people sitting at the table began to think to themselves, "Who is this man? How can he forgive sins?"

⁵⁰Jesus said to the woman, "Because you believed, you are saved. Go in peace."

The Group with Jesus

8 The next day, while Jesus was traveling through some cities and small towns, he preached and told the Good News about God's kingdom. The 12 apostles were with him. ²There were also some women with him who had been healed of sicknesses and evil spirits. One of the women was Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out. ³Also among the women were Joanna, the wife of Chuza (Herod's helper), Suzanna, and many other women. They used their own money to help Jesus and his apostles.

Jesus Uses a Story About a Farmer Planting Seed

⁴A great crowd gathered. People were coming to Jesus from every town. He told them this story:

⁵"A farmer went out to plant his seed. While he was planting, some seed fell beside the road. People walked on the seed, and

the birds ate all this seed. ⁶Some seed fell on rock. It began to grow but then died because it had no water. ⁷Some seed fell among thorny weeds. This seed grew, but later the weeds choked the good plants. ⁸And some seed fell on good ground. This seed grew and made 100 times more grain."

Jesus finished the story. Then he called out, "You people who hear me, listen!"

⁹Jesus' followers asked him, "What does this story mean?"

¹⁰Jesus said, "You have been chosen to know the secret truths of the kingdom of God. But I use stories to speak to other people. I do this so that:

'They will look, but will not see;

and they will listen, but they will not understand.'

Isaiah 6:9

¹¹"This is what the story means: The seed is God's teaching. ¹²What is the seed that fell beside the road? It is like the people who hear God's teaching, but then the devil comes. He takes it away from their hearts so they cannot believe the teaching and be saved. ¹³What is the seed that fell on rock? It is like those who hear God's teaching and accept it gladly. But they don't have deep roots. They believe for a while, but then trouble comes. They stop believing and turn away from God. ¹⁴What is the seed that fell among the thorny weeds? It is like those who hear God's teaching, but they let the worries, riches, and pleasures of this life keep them from growing. So they never produce good fruit. ¹⁵And what is the seed that fell on the good ground? That is like those who hear God's teaching with a good, honest heart. They obey God's teaching and patiently produce good fruit."

Use the Truth You Have

¹⁶"No one lights a lamp and then covers it with a bowl or hides it under a bed. Instead, he puts the lamp on a lampstand so that those who come in will have enough light to see. ¹⁷Everything that is hidden will become clear. Every secret thing will be made known. ¹⁸So be careful how you listen. The person who has something will be given more. But to the person who has nothing, this will happen: Even what he thinks he has will be taken away from him."

Jesus' Followers Are His True Family

¹⁹Jesus' mother and brothers came to see him. There was such a crowd that they could not get to him. ²⁰Someone said to Jesus, "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside. They want to see you."

²¹Jesus answered them, "My mother and my brothers are those who listen to God's teaching and obey it!"

The Followers See Jesus' Power

²²One day Jesus and his followers got into a boat. He said to them, "Come with me across the lake." And so they started across. ²³While they were sailing, Jesus fell asleep. A big storm blew up on the lake. The boat began to fill with water, and they were in danger. ²⁴The followers went to Jesus and woke him. They said, "Master! Master! We will drown!"

Jesus got up and gave a command to the wind and the waves. The wind stopped, and the lake became calm. ²⁵Jesus said to his followers, "Where is your faith?"

The followers were afraid and amazed. They said to each other, "What kind of man is this? He commands the wind and the water, and they obey him!"

A Man with Demons Inside Him

²⁶Jesus and his followers sailed across the lake from Galilee to the area where the Gergesene people live. ²⁷When Jesus got out of the boat, a man from the town came to Jesus. This man had demons in him. For a long time he had worn no clothes. He lived in the caves where the dead are buried, not in a house. ²⁸When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him. The man said with a loud voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Please don't punish me!" ²⁹He said this because Jesus had commanded the evil spirit to come out of him. Many times it had taken hold of him. He had been kept under guard and chained hand and foot. But he had broken his chains and had been driven by the demon out into the desert.

³⁰Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"

The man answered, "Legion." (He said his name was "Legion" because many demons were in him.) ³¹The demons

begged Jesus not to send them into eternal darkness.”³² On the hill there was a large herd of pigs eating. The demons begged Jesus to allow them to go into the pigs. So Jesus allowed the demons to do this.³³ Then the demons came out of the man and went into the pigs. The herd of pigs ran down the hill and into the lake. All the pigs drowned.

³⁴The men who took care of the pigs ran away. They told about this in the fields and in the town,³⁵ and people went to see what had happened. They came to Jesus and found the man sitting there at Jesus’ feet. The man was clothed and in his right mind; the demons were gone. But the people were frightened.³⁶ The men who saw these things happen told the others all about how Jesus had made the man well.³⁷ All the people of the Gergesene country asked Jesus to go away because they were afraid. So Jesus got into the boat and went back to Galilee.³⁸ The man that Jesus had healed begged to go with him.

But Jesus sent him away, saying,³⁹ “Go back home and tell people what God did for you.”

So the man went all over town telling how much Jesus had done for him.

Jesus Gives Life to a Dead Girl and Heals a Sick Woman

⁴⁰When Jesus got back to Galilee, a crowd welcomed him. Everyone was waiting for him.⁴¹ A man named Jairus came to Jesus. Jairus was a ruler of the synagogue. He bowed down at Jesus’ feet and begged him to come to his house.⁴² Jairus had only one daughter. She was 12 years old, and she was dying.

While Jesus was on his way to Jairus’ house, the people were crowding all around him.⁴³ A woman was there who had been bleeding for 12 years. She had spent all her money on doctors,^b but no doctor was able to heal her.⁴⁴ The woman came up behind Jesus and touched the edge of his coat. At that moment, her bleeding stopped.⁴⁵ Then Jesus said, “Who touched me?”

All the people said they had not touched Jesus. Peter said, “Master, the people are all around you and are pushing against you.”

⁴⁶But Jesus said, “Someone did touch me! I felt power go out from me.”⁴⁷ When the woman saw that she could not hide, she

^{31a} Or the abyss. ^{43b} Some Greek copies omit *She had spent all her money on doctors.*

came forward, shaking. She bowed down before Jesus. While all the people listened, she told why she had touched him and how she was healed immediately. ⁴⁸Jesus said to her, "Dear woman, you are healed because you believed. Go in peace."

⁴⁹While Jesus was still speaking, someone came from the house of the synagogue ruler and said to the ruler, "Your daughter has died! Don't bother the teacher now."

⁵⁰When Jesus heard this, he said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid. Just believe, and your daughter will be well."

⁵¹Jesus went to the house. He let only Peter, John, James, and the girl's father and mother go inside with him. ⁵²All the people were crying and feeling sad because the girl was dead. But Jesus said, "Don't cry. She is not dead; she is only sleeping."

⁵³The people laughed at Jesus, because they knew that the girl was dead. ⁵⁴But Jesus took her by the hand and called to her, "My child, stand up!" ⁵⁵Her spirit came back into her and she stood up immediately. Jesus said, "Give her something to eat." ⁵⁶The girl's parents were amazed, but Jesus told them not to tell anyone about what happened.

Jesus Sends the 12 Apostles

9 Jesus called the 12 apostles together. He gave them power to heal sicknesses and power over all demons. ²Jesus sent them out to tell about God's kingdom and to heal the sick. ³He said to them, "When you travel, don't take a walking stick. Also, don't carry a bag, or food, or money. Take for your trip only the clothes you are wearing. ⁴When you go into a house, stay there until it is time to leave. ⁵If the people in the town will not welcome you, go outside the town and shake the dust off your feet. This will be a warning to them."

⁶So the apostles went out and traveled through all the towns. They told the Good News and healed people everywhere.

Herod Is Confused About Jesus

⁷Herod, ruler of Galilee, heard about all these things that were happening. He was confused because some people said, "John the Baptist is risen from death." ⁸Others said, "Elijah has come to us." And still others said, "One of the prophets from long ago has risen from death." ⁹Herod said, "I cut off John's

head. So who is this man I hear these things about?" And Herod kept trying to see Jesus.

Jesus Feeds More than 5,000 People

¹⁰When the apostles returned, they told Jesus everything they had done on their trip. Then Jesus took them away to a town called Bethsaida. There, Jesus and his apostles could be alone together. ¹¹But the people learned where Jesus went and followed him. Jesus welcomed them and talked with them about God's kingdom. He healed those who needed to be healed.

¹²Late in the afternoon, the 12 apostles came to Jesus and said, "No one lives in this place. Send the people away. They need to find food and places to sleep in the farms and towns around here."

¹³But Jesus said to the apostles, "You give them something to eat."

They said, "We have only five loaves of bread and two fish. Do you want us to go buy food for all these people?" ¹⁴(There were about 5,000 men there.)

Jesus said to his followers, "Tell the people to sit in groups of about 50 people."

¹⁵So the followers did this and all the people sat down. ¹⁶Then Jesus took the five loaves of bread and two fish. He looked up to heaven and thanked God for the food. Then Jesus divided the food and gave it to the followers to give to the people. ¹⁷All the people ate and were satisfied, and there was much food left. Twelve baskets were filled with pieces of food that were not eaten.

Jesus Is the Christ

¹⁸One time when Jesus was praying alone, his followers came together there. Jesus asked them, "Who do the people say I am?"

¹⁹They answered, "Some say you are John the Baptist. Others say you are Elijah. And others say you are one of the prophets from long ago who has come back to life."

²⁰Then Jesus asked, "And who do you say I am?"

Peter answered, "You are the Christ^a from God."

^{20a} Or *Messiah*.

²¹Jesus warned them not to tell anyone. Then he said, ²²"The Son of Man must suffer many things. He will be rejected by the older Jewish leaders, the leading priests, and the teachers of the law. The Son of Man will be killed. But after three days he will be raised from death."

²³Jesus went on to say to all of them, "If anyone wants to follow me, he must say 'No' to the things he wants. He must accept the cross that is given to him every day, and he must follow me. ²⁴Whoever wants to save his life will lose it. And whoever gives his life for me will save it. ²⁵It is worth nothing for a man to have the whole world, if he himself is destroyed or lost. ²⁶If anyone is ashamed of me and my teaching, then I^a will be ashamed of him. I will be ashamed of him at the time I come with my glory and with the glory of the Father and the holy angels. ²⁷I tell you the truth. Some of you people standing here will see the kingdom of God before you die."

Moses, Elijah, and Jesus

²⁸About eight days after Jesus said these things, he took Peter, James, and John and went up on a mountain to pray. ²⁹While Jesus was praying, his face was changed and his clothes became shining white. ³⁰Then two men, Moses and Elijah, were talking with Jesus. ³¹They appeared in heavenly glory, talking with Jesus about his death which would happen in Jerusalem. ³²Peter and the others were asleep. But they woke up and saw the glory of Jesus. They also saw the two men who were standing with him. ³³When Moses and Elijah were about to leave, Peter said, "Master, it is good that we are here. We will put three tents here—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." (Peter did not know what he was saying.)

³⁴While Peter was saying these things, a cloud came down all around them. Peter, James, and John became afraid when the cloud covered them. ³⁵A voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is my Son. He is the One I have chosen. Obey him."

³⁶When the voice finished speaking, only Jesus was there. Peter, James, and John said nothing. At that time they told no one about what they had seen.

^{26^a} Or *the Son of Man*.

Jesus Heals a Boy Who Has an Evil Spirit

³⁷The next day, Jesus, Peter, James, and John came down from the mountain. A large crowd met Jesus. ³⁸A man in the crowd shouted to Jesus, "Teacher, please come and look at my son. He is the only child I have. ³⁹A spirit comes into my son, and then he shouts. He loses control of himself and he foams at the mouth. The evil spirit keeps on hurting him and almost never leaves him. ⁴⁰I begged your followers to make the evil spirit leave my son, but they could not do it."

⁴¹Jesus answered, "You people who live now have no faith. Your lives are all wrong. How long must I be with you and be patient with you?" Then Jesus said to the man, "Bring your son here."

⁴²While the boy was coming, the demon threw him on the ground. The boy lost control of himself. But Jesus gave a strong command to the evil spirit. Then the boy was healed, and Jesus gave him back to his father. ⁴³All the people were amazed at the great power of God.

Jesus Talks About His Death

The people were all wondering about the things Jesus did. But he said to his followers, ⁴⁴"Don't forget the things I tell you now: The Son of Man will be handed over into the control of men." ⁴⁵But the followers did not understand what Jesus meant. The meaning was hidden from them so that they could not understand it. But they were afraid to ask Jesus about what he said.

The Most Important Person

⁴⁶Jesus' followers began to have an argument about which one of them was the greatest. ⁴⁷Jesus knew what they were thinking. So he took a little child and stood the child beside him. ⁴⁸Then Jesus said, "If anyone accepts a little child like this in my name, then he accepts me. And when he accepts me, he accepts the One who sent me. He who is least among you all—he is the greatest."

Anyone Not Against You Is for You

⁴⁹John answered, "Master, we saw someone using your name to force demons out of people. We told him to stop because he does not belong to our group."

⁵⁰Jesus said to him, "Don't stop him. If a person is not against you, then he is for you."

A Samaritan Town

⁵¹The time was coming near when Jesus would leave and be taken to heaven. He decided to go to Jerusalem ⁵²and sent some men ahead of him. The men went into a town in Samaria to make everything ready for Jesus. ⁵³But the people there would not welcome him because he was going toward Jerusalem. ⁵⁴James and John, the followers of Jesus, saw this. They said, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven and destroy those people?"^a

⁵⁵But Jesus turned and scolded them.^b ⁵⁶Then he and his followers went to another town.

Following Jesus

⁵⁷They were all going along the road. Someone said to Jesus, "I will follow you any place you go."

⁵⁸Jesus answered, "The foxes have holes, and the birds have nests. But the Son of Man has no place to rest his head."

⁵⁹Jesus said to another man, "Follow me!"

But the man said, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father."

⁶⁰But Jesus said to him, "Let the people who are dead bury their own dead! You must go and tell about the kingdom of God."

⁶¹Another man said, "I will follow you, Lord, but first let me go and say good-bye to my family."

⁶²Jesus said, "Anyone who begins to plow a field but keeps looking back is of no use in the kingdom of God."

Jesus Sends the 72 Men

10 After this, the Lord chose 72^c more men. He sent them out in pairs. He sent them ahead of him into every town

^{54a} Here, some Greek copies add: . . . like Elijah did. ^{55b} Here, some Greek copies add: And Jesus said, "You don't know what kind of spirit you belong to." ⁵⁶ The Son of Man did not come to destroy the souls of men but to save them. ^{1c} Many Greek copies read 70.

and place where he planned to go. ²He said to them, "There are a great many people to harvest. But there are only a few workers to harvest them. God owns the harvest. Pray to God that he will send more workers to help gather his harvest. ³You can go now. But listen! I am sending you, and you will be like sheep among wolves. ⁴Don't carry a purse, a bag, or shoes. Don't stop to talk with people on the road. ⁵Before you go into a house, say, 'Peace be with this house.' ⁶If a peaceful man lives there, your blessing of peace will stay with him. If the man is not peaceful, then your blessing of peace will come back to you. ⁷Stay in the peaceful house. Eat and drink what the people there give you. A worker should be given his pay. Don't move from house to house. ⁸If you go into a town and the people welcome you, eat what they give you. ⁹Heal the sick who live there. Tell them, 'The kingdom of God is soon coming to you!' ¹⁰But if you go into a town, and the people don't welcome you, then go out into the streets of that town and say, ¹¹'Even the dirt from your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. But remember that the kingdom of God is coming soon.' ¹²I tell you, on the Judgment Day it will be worse for the people of that town than for the people of Sodom."

Jesus Warns People Who Don't Believe

¹³"How terrible for you, Chorazin! How terrible for you, Bethsaida! I did many miracles in you. If those same miracles had happened in Tyre and Sidon, then those people would have changed their lives and stopped sinning long ago. They would have worn sackcloth and put ashes on themselves to show that they had changed. ¹⁴But on the Judgment Day it will be worse for you than for Tyre and Sidon. ¹⁵And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to heaven? No! You will be thrown down to the depths!

¹⁶"He who listens to you is really listening to me. He who refuses to accept you is really refusing to accept me. And he who refuses to accept me is refusing to accept the One who sent me."

Satan Falls

¹⁷When the 72^a men came back from their trip, they were

^{17^a} Many Greek copies read 70.

very happy. They said, "Lord, even the demons obeyed us when we used your name!" ¹⁸Jesus said to the men, "I saw Satan falling like lightning from the sky. ¹⁹Listen! I gave you power to walk on snakes and scorpions. I gave you more power than the Enemy [the devil] has. Nothing will hurt you. ²⁰You should be happy, but not because the spirits obey you. You should be happy because your names are written in heaven."

Jesus Prays to the Father

²¹At that time the Holy Spirit filled Jesus with joy. He said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the people who are wise and smart. But you have shown them to those who are like little children. Yes, Father, you did this because this is what you really wanted."

²²"My Father has given me all things. No one knows the Son—only the Father knows. And only the Son knows the Father. The only people who will know about the Father are those whom the Son chooses to tell."

²³Then Jesus turned to his followers and said in private, "You are blessed to see what you now see! ²⁴I tell you, many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see. But they did not see these things. And many prophets and kings wanted to hear what you hear. But they did not hear these things."

Story About the Good Samaritan

²⁵Then a teacher of the law stood up. He was trying to test Jesus. He said, "Teacher, what must I do to get life forever?"

²⁶Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?"

²⁷The man answered, "Love the Lord your God. You must love him with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind."^a Also, "You must love your neighbor as you love yourself."^b

²⁸Jesus said to him, "Your answer is right. Do this and you will have life forever."

²⁹But the man wanted to show that the way he was living was right. So he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

^{27a} Deuteronomy 6:5. ^{27b} Leviticus 19:18.

³⁰To answer this question, Jesus said, "A man was going down the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. Some robbers attacked him. They tore off his clothes and beat him. Then they left him lying there, almost dead. ³¹It happened that a Jewish priest was going down that road. When the priest saw the man, he walked by on the other side of the road. ³²Next, a Levite came there. He went over and looked at the man. Then he walked by on the other side of the road. ³³Then a Samaritan traveling down the road came to where the hurt man was lying. He saw the man and felt very sorry for him. ³⁴The Samaritan went to him and poured olive oil and wine on his wounds and bandaged them. He put the hurt man on his own donkey and took him to an inn. At the inn, the Samaritan took care of him. ³⁵The next day, the Samaritan brought out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. The Samaritan said, 'Take care of this man. If you spend more money on him, I will pay it back to you when I come again.'"

³⁶Then Jesus said, "Which one of these three men do you think was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by the robbers?"

³⁷The teacher of the law answered, "The one who helped him."

Jesus said to him, "Then go and do the same thing he did!"

Mary and Martha

³⁸While Jesus and his followers were traveling, Jesus went into a town. A woman named Martha let Jesus stay at her house. ³⁹Martha had a sister named Mary. Mary was sitting at Jesus' feet and listening to him teach. ⁴⁰Martha became angry because she had so much work to do. She went in and said, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me alone to do all the work? Tell her to help me!"

⁴¹But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are getting worried and upset about too many things. ⁴²Only one thing is important. Mary has chosen the right thing, and it will never be taken away from her."

Jesus Teaches About Prayer

11 One time Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his followers said to him, "John taught his followers how to pray. Lord, teach us how to pray, too."

²Jesus said to them, "When you pray, say:

'Father, we pray that your name will always be kept holy.

We pray that your kingdom will come.

³Give us the food we need for each day.

⁴Forgive us the sins we have done,
because we forgive every person
who has done wrong to us.

And do not cause us to be tested.'"^a

Continue to Ask

⁵⁻⁶ Then Jesus said to them, "Suppose one of you went to your friend's house at midnight and said to him, 'A friend of mine has come into town to visit me. But I have nothing for him to eat. Please lend me three loaves of bread.' ⁷Your friend inside the house answers, 'Don't bother me! The door is already locked. My children and I are in bed. I cannot get up and give you the bread now.' ⁸I tell you, maybe friendship is not enough to make him get up to give you the bread. But he will surely get up to give you what you need if you continue to ask. ⁹So I tell you, continue to ask, and God will give to you. Continue to search, and you will find. Continue to knock, and the door will open for you. ¹⁰Yes, if a person continues asking, he will receive. If he continues looking, he will find. And if he continues knocking, the door will open for him. ¹¹What would you fathers do if your son asks you for a ^b fish? Would any of you give him a snake? ¹²Or, if your son asks for an egg, would you give him a scorpion? ¹³Even though you are bad, you know how to give good things to your children. So surely your heavenly Father knows how to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him."

^{4a} Some Greek copies add words to make this passage read closely to Matthew 6:9-13. ^{11b} Some Greek copies add *loaf? Would any of you give him a stone? Or for a*

Jesus' Power Is from God

¹⁴One time Jesus was sending a demon out of a man who could not talk. When the demon came out, the man was able to speak. The people were amazed. ¹⁵But some of them said, "Jesus uses the power of Beelzebul [the devil] to force demons out of people. Beelzebul is the ruler of demons."

¹⁶Other people wanted to test Jesus. They asked him to give them a sign from heaven. ¹⁷But Jesus knew what they were thinking. So he said to them, "Every kingdom that is divided and fights against itself will be destroyed. And a family that fights against itself will break apart. ¹⁸So if Satan is fighting against himself, then how will his kingdom last? You say that I use the power of Beelzebul to force out demons. ¹⁹But if I use the power of Beelzebul to force out demons, then by what power do your people force out demons? So your own people prove that you are wrong. ²⁰But if I use the power of God to force out demons, the kingdom of God has come to you!

²¹"When a strong man with many weapons guards his own house, then the things in his house are safe. ²²But suppose a stronger man comes and defeats him. The stronger man will take away the weapons that the first man trusted to keep his house safe. Then the stronger man will do what he wants with the first man's things.

²³"If anyone is not with me, he is against me. He who does not work with me is working against me."

The Empty Man

²⁴"When an evil spirit comes out of a person, it travels through dry places, looking for a place to rest. But that spirit finds no place to rest. So it says, 'I will go back to the home I left.' ²⁵When the spirit comes back to that person, it finds that home swept clean and made neat. ²⁶Then the evil spirit goes out and brings seven other spirits more evil than itself. Then all the evil spirits go into that person and live there. And he has even more trouble than he had before."

The People Who Are Truly Blessed

²⁷When Jesus was saying these things, a woman in the crowd spoke out. She said to Jesus, “Your mother is blessed because she gave birth to you and nursed you.”

²⁸But Jesus said, “Those who hear the teaching of God and obey it—they are the ones who are truly blessed.”

Give Us Proof!

²⁹The crowd grew larger. Jesus said, “The people who live today are evil. They ask for a miracle as a sign from God. But they will have no sign—only the sign of Jonah. ³⁰Jonah was a sign for those people who lived in Nineveh. In the same way the Son of Man will be a sign for the people of this time. ³¹On the Judgment Day the Queen of the South will stand up with the men who live now, and she will show that they are guilty, because she came from far away to listen to Solomon’s wise teaching. And I tell you that someone greater than Solomon is here! ³²On the Judgment Day the men of Nineveh will stand up with the people who live now, and they will show that you are guilty. Because when Jonah preached to those people, they changed their hearts and lives. And I tell you that someone greater than Jonah is here!”

Be a Light for the World

³³“No one takes a light and puts it under a bowl or hides it. Instead, he puts the light on a lampstand so that the people who come in can see. ³⁴Your eye is a light for the body. If your eyes are good, then your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are evil, then your whole body will be full of darkness. ³⁵So be careful! Don’t let the light in you become darkness. ³⁶If your whole body is full of light, and none of it is dark, then you will shine bright, as when a lamp shines on you.”

Jesus Criticizes the Pharisees

³⁷After Jesus had finished speaking, a Pharisee asked Jesus to eat with him. So Jesus went in and sat at the table. ³⁸But the Pharisee was surprised when he saw that Jesus did not wash

^{31d} Or something.

before the meal. ³⁹The Lord said to him, "You Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and the dish. But inside you are full of greed and evil. ⁴⁰You are foolish. The same One who made what is outside also made what is inside. ⁴¹So give what is in your cups and dishes to the poor. Then you will be fully clean. ⁴²But how terrible for you Pharisees! You give God one-tenth of even your mint, your rue, and every other plant in your garden. But you forget to be fair to other people and to love God. These are the things you should do. And you should also continue to do those other things. ⁴³How terrible for you Pharisees, because you love to get the most important seats in the synagogues. And you love for people to show respect to you in the marketplaces. ⁴⁴How terrible for you, because you are like hidden graves. People walk on them without knowing it."

Jesus Talks to the Jewish Teachers

⁴⁵One of the teachers of the law said to Jesus, "Teacher, when you say these things, you are insulting us, too."

⁴⁶Jesus answered, "How terrible for you, you teachers of the law! You put heavy burdens on people that are hard for them to carry. But you yourselves don't lift a finger to help carry the burdens. ⁴⁷How terrible for you, because you build tombs for the prophets. But these are the prophets that your fathers killed! ⁴⁸And now you show that you approve of what your fathers did. They killed the prophets, and you build tombs for the prophets! ⁴⁹This is why the Wisdom of God said, 'I will send prophets and apostles to them. Some of my prophets and apostles will be killed, and others will be treated cruelly.' ⁵⁰So you who live now will be punished for the deaths of all the prophets who were killed since the beginning of the world. ⁵¹You will be punished for the killing of Abel and for the killing of Zechariah.^a Zechariah was killed between the altar and the temple. Yes, I tell you that you people who live now will be punished for them all.

⁵²"How terrible for you, you teachers of the law. You have hidden the key to learning about God. You yourselves would not learn, and you stopped others from learning, too."

⁵³When Jesus was leaving, the teachers of the law and the

^{51a} In the Hebrew Old Testament, the first and last men to be murdered.

Pharisees began to give him trouble, asking him questions about many things. ⁵⁴They were trying to catch Jesus saying something wrong.

Don't Be Like the Pharisees

12 Meanwhile many thousands of people had gathered. There were so many that they were stepping on each other. Before Jesus spoke to them, he said to his followers, "Be careful of the yeast of the Pharisees. They are hypocrites. ²Everything that is hidden will be shown. Everything that is secret will be made known. ³The things you say in the dark will be told in the light. The things you have whispered in an inner room will be shouted from the top of the house."

Fear Only God

⁴Then Jesus said to the people, "I tell you, my friends, don't be afraid of people. People can kill the body, but after that they can do nothing more to hurt you. ⁵I will show you the One to fear. You should fear him who has the power to kill you and also to throw you into hell. Yes, he is the One you should fear.

⁶"When five sparrows are sold, they cost only two pennies. But God does not forget any of them. ⁷Yes, God even knows how many hairs you have on your head. Don't be afraid. You are worth much more than many sparrows."

Don't Be Ashamed of Jesus

⁸"I tell you, if anyone stands before others and says that he believes in me, then I will say that he belongs to me. I will say this before the angels of God. ⁹But if anyone stands before others and says he does not believe in me, then I will say that he does not belong to me. I will say this before the angels of God.

¹⁰"If a person says something against the Son of Man, he can be forgiven. But a person who says bad things against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

¹¹"When men bring you into the synagogues before the leaders and other important men, don't worry about how to defend yourself or what to say. ¹²At that time the Holy Spirit will teach you what you must say."

^{8a} Or the Son of Man.

Jesus Warns Against Selfishness

¹³One of the men in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide with me the property our father left us."

¹⁴But Jesus said to him, "Who said that I should be your judge or decide how to divide the property between you two?" ¹⁵Then Jesus said to them, "Be careful and guard against all kinds of greed. A man's life is not measured by the many things he owns."

¹⁶Then Jesus used this story: "There was a rich man who had some land, which grew a good crop of food. ¹⁷The rich man thought to himself, 'What will I do? I have no place to keep all my crops.' ¹⁸Then he said, 'I know what I will do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones! I will put all my grain and other goods together in my new barns. ¹⁹Then I can say to myself, I have enough good things stored to last for many years. Rest, eat, drink, and enjoy life!' ²⁰But God said to that man, 'Foolish man! Tonight you will die. Then who will get those things you have prepared for yourself?'

²¹"This is how it will be for anyone who stores things up only for himself and is not rich toward God."

Putting God's Kingdom First

²²Jesus said to his followers, "So I tell you, don't worry about the food you need to live. Don't worry about the clothes you need for your body. ²³Life is more important than food. And the body is more important than clothes. ²⁴Look at the ravens. They don't plant or harvest. They don't save food in houses or barns. But God takes care of them. And you are worth much more than birds. ²⁵None of you can add any time to your life' by worrying about it. ²⁶If you cannot do even the little things, then why worry about the big things? ²⁷Look at how the wild flowers grow. They don't work or make clothes for themselves. But I tell you that even Solomon, the great and rich king, was not dressed as beautifully as one of these flowers. ²⁸God clothes the grass in the field like that. That grass is living today, but tomorrow it will be thrown into the fire. So you know how much more God will clothe you. Don't have so little faith! ²⁹Don't always think about what you will eat or what you will

^{25a} Or single cubit to his height.

drink. Don't worry about it. ³⁰All the people in the world are trying to get those things. Your Father knows that you need them. ³¹The thing you should seek is God's kingdom. Then all the other things you need will be given to you."

Don't Trust in Money

³²"Don't fear, little flock. Your Father wants to give you the kingdom. ³³Sell the things you have and give to the poor. Get for yourselves purses that don't wear out. Get the treasure in heaven that never runs out. Thieves can't steal it in heaven, and moths can't destroy it. ³⁴Your heart will be where your treasure is."

Always Be Ready

³⁵"Be ready! Be dressed for service and have your lamps shining. ³⁶Be like servants who are waiting for their master to come home from a wedding party. The master comes and knocks. The servants open the door for him. ³⁷Those servants will be blessed when their master comes home, because he sees that his servants are ready and waiting for him. I tell you the truth. The master will dress himself to serve and tell the servants to sit at the table. Then the master will serve them. ³⁸Those servants might have to wait until midnight or later for their master. But they will be happy when he comes in and finds them still waiting.

³⁹Remember this: If the owner of the house knew what time a thief was coming, then the owner would not allow the thief to enter his house. ⁴⁰So you also must be ready! The Son of Man will come at a time when you don't expect him!"

Who Is the Trusted Servant?

⁴¹Peter said, "Lord, did you tell this story for us or for all people?"

⁴²The Lord said, "Who is the wise and trusted servant? Who is the servant that the master trusts to give the other servants their food at the right time? ⁴³When the master comes and finds his servant doing the work he gave him, that servant will be very happy. ⁴⁴I tell you the truth. The master will choose that servant to take care of everything the master owns. ⁴⁵But what

will happen if the servant is evil and thinks that his master will not come back soon? That servant will begin to beat the other servants, men and women. He will eat and drink and get drunk. ⁴⁶Then the master will come when that servant is not ready. It will be a time when the servant is not expecting him. Then the master will cut him in pieces and send him away to be with the others who don't obey.

⁴⁷"The servant who knows what his master wants but is not ready or does not do what the master wants will be beaten with many blows! ⁴⁸But the servant who does not know what his master wants and does things that deserve punishment will be beaten with few blows. Everyone who has been given much will be responsible for much. Much more will be expected from the one who has been given more."

People Will Not Agree About Jesus

⁴⁹Jesus continued speaking, "I came to set fire to the world. I wish it were already burning! ⁵⁰I have a baptism to go through. I feel very troubled until it is over. ⁵¹Do you think that I came to give peace to the world? No! I came to divide the world! ⁵²From now on, a family with five people will be divided, three against two, and two against three.

⁵³A father and son will be divided:

The son will be against his father.

The father will be against his son.

A mother and her daughter will be divided:

The daughter will be against her mother.

The mother will be against her daughter.

A mother-in-law and her daughter-in-law will be divided:

The daughter-in-law will be against her mother-in-law.

The mother-in-law will be against her daughter-in-law."

Understanding the Times

⁵⁴Then Jesus said to the people, "When you see clouds coming up in the west, you say, 'It's going to rain.' And soon it begins to rain. ⁵⁵When you feel the wind begin to blow from the

south, you say, 'It will be a hot day.' And you are right. ⁵⁶Hypocrites! You can understand the weather. Why don't you understand what is happening now?"

Settle Your Problems

⁵⁷"Why can't you decide for yourselves what is right? ⁵⁸When someone is suing you, and you are going with him to court, try hard to settle it on the way. If you don't settle it, he may take you to the judge. The judge will turn you over to the officer, who will throw you into jail. ⁵⁹You will not get out of there until they have taken everything you have."

Change Your Hearts

13 At that time some people were there with Jesus. They told him about what had happened to some people from Galilee. Pilate killed them while they were offering sacrifices to God. ²Jesus answered, "Do you think this happened to them because they were more sinful than all others from Galilee? ³No, they were not! But if all of you don't change your hearts and lives, then you will be destroyed as they were! ⁴What about those 18 people who died when the tower of Siloam fell on them? Do you think they were more sinful than all the others who live in Jerusalem? ⁵They were not! But I tell you, if you don't change your hearts and lives, then you will all be destroyed too!"

The Useless Tree

⁶Jesus told this story: "A man had a fig tree planted in his garden. He came looking for some fruit on the tree, but he found none. ⁷So the man said to his servant who took care of his garden, 'I have been looking for fruit on this tree for three years, but I never find any. Cut it down! Why should it waste the ground?' ⁸But the servant answered, 'Master, let the tree have one more year to produce fruit. Let me dig up the dirt around it and put on some fertilizer. ⁹Maybe the tree will produce fruit next year. If the tree still doesn't produce fruit, then you can cut it down.'"

Jesus Heals a Woman on the Sabbath Day

¹⁰Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath day. ¹¹A woman was there who had a spirit in her that had made her a cripple for 18 years. Her back was always bent; she could not stand up straight. ¹²When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, "Woman, your sickness has left you!" ¹³Jesus put his hands on her. Immediately she was able to stand up straight and began praising God.

¹⁴The synagogue leader was angry because Jesus healed on the Sabbath day. He said to the people, "There are six days for work. So come to be healed on one of those days. Don't come for healing on the Sabbath day."

¹⁵The Lord answered, "You people are hypocrites! All of you untie your work animals and lead them to drink water every day—even on the Sabbath day! ¹⁶This woman that I healed is our Jewish sister.^a But Satan has held her for 18 years. Surely it is not wrong for her to be freed from her sickness on a Sabbath day!" ¹⁷When Jesus said this, all the men who were criticizing him were ashamed. And all the people were happy for the wonderful things Jesus was doing.

What Is God's Kingdom Like?

¹⁸Then Jesus said, "What is God's kingdom like? What can I compare it with? ¹⁹God's kingdom is like the seed of the mustard plant. A man plants this seed in his garden, and it grows and becomes a tree. The birds build nests on its branches."

²⁰Jesus said again, "What can I compare God's kingdom with? ²¹It is like yeast that a woman mixes into a big bowl of flour to make bread. The yeast makes all the dough rise."

The Narrow Door

²²Jesus was teaching in every town and village. He continued to travel toward Jerusalem. ²³Someone said to Jesus, "Lord, how many people will be saved? Only a few?"

Jesus said, ²⁴"Try hard to enter through the narrow door. Many people will try to enter there, but they will not be able. ²⁵A man gets up and closes the door of his house. You can

^{16a} Or daughter of Abraham.

stand outside and knock on the door, saying, 'Sir, open the door for us!' But he will answer, 'I don't know you! Where did you come from?' ²⁶Then you will say, 'We ate and drank with you. You taught in the streets of our town.' ²⁷But he will say to you, 'I don't know you! Where did you come from? Go away from me! All of you do evil!' ²⁸You will see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets in God's kingdom. But you will be left outside. Then you will cry and grind your teeth. ²⁹People will come from the east, west, north, and south. They will sit down at the table in the kingdom of God. ³⁰Those who have the lowest place in life now will have the highest place in God's kingdom. And those who have the highest place now will have the lowest place in God's kingdom."

Jesus Will Die in Jerusalem

³¹At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said, "Go away from here! Herod wants to kill you!"

³²Jesus said to them, "Go tell that fox [Herod], 'Today and tomorrow I am forcing demons out of people and finishing my work of healing. Then, on the third day, I will reach my goal.' ³³Yet I must be on my way today and tomorrow and the next day. Surely it is not possible for a prophet to die outside Jerusalem."

³⁴"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You kill the prophets. You kill with rocks those men that God has sent you. Many times I wanted to help your people. I wanted to gather them together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. But you did not let me. ³⁵Now your home will be left completely empty. I tell you, you will not see me again until that time when you will say, 'Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

Is It Right to Heal on the Sabbath Day?

14 On a Sabbath day, Jesus went to the home of a leading Pharisee to eat with him. The people there were all watching Jesus very closely. ²A man with dropsy was brought before Jesus. ³Jesus said to the Pharisees and teachers of the law, "Is it right or wrong to heal on the Sabbath day?" ⁴But they would not answer his question. So Jesus took the man, healed him, and sent him away. ⁵Jesus said to the Pharisees and teach-

ers of the law, "If your son^a or ox falls into a well on the Sabbath day, will you not pull him out quickly?" ⁶And they could not answer him.

Don't Make Yourself Important

⁷Then Jesus noticed that some of the guests were choosing the best places to sit. So Jesus told this story: ⁸"When someone invites you to a wedding feast, don't take the most important seat. The host may have invited someone more important than you. ⁹And if you are sitting in the most important seat, then the host will come to you and say, 'Give this man your seat.' Then you will begin to move down to the last place, and you will be very embarrassed. ¹⁰So when you are invited, go sit in a seat that is not important. Then the host will come to you and say, 'Friend, move up here to a more important place!' Then all the other guests will honor you. ¹¹Everyone who makes himself great will be made humble. But the person who makes himself humble will be made great."

You Will Be Rewarded

¹²Then Jesus said to the man who had invited him, "When you give a lunch or a dinner, don't invite your friends, brothers, relatives, and rich neighbors. They will invite you back to eat with them. Then you will have your reward. ¹³Instead, when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind. ¹⁴Then you will be blessed, because they cannot pay you back. They have nothing. But you will be rewarded when the good people rise from death."

Story About a Big Dinner Party

¹⁵One of the men sitting at the table with Jesus heard these things. The man said to Jesus, "The people who will eat a meal in God's kingdom are blessed!"

¹⁶Jesus said to him, "A man gave a big dinner and invited many people. ¹⁷When it was time to eat, the man sent his servant to tell the guests, 'Come! Everything is ready!' ¹⁸But all the guests said they could not come. Each man made an excuse. The first one said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go look

^{5a} Some older Greek copies say *donkey*.

at it. Please excuse me.’¹⁹ Another man said, ‘I have just bought five pairs of oxen; I must go and try them. Please excuse me.’²⁰ A third man said, ‘I just got married; I can’t come.’²¹ So the servant returned and told his master what had happened. Then the master became angry and said, ‘Go at once into the streets and alleys of the town. Bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.’²² Later the servant said to him, ‘Master, I did what you told me to do, but we still have places for more people.’²³ The master said to the servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes. Tell the people there to come. I want my house to be full!’²⁴ None of those men that I invited first will ever eat with me!’”

You Must First Plan

²⁵ Large crowds were traveling with Jesus. He turned and said to them, ²⁶ “If anyone comes to me but loves his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, or sisters more than he loves me, then he cannot be my follower. A person must love me more than he loves himself! ²⁷ If anyone will not carry the cross that is given to him when he follows me, then he cannot be my follower. ²⁸ If you wanted to build a tower, you would first sit down and decide how much it would cost. You must see if you have enough money to finish the job. ²⁹ If you don’t do that, you might begin the work, but you would not be able to finish. And if you could not finish it, then all who would see it would laugh at you. ³⁰ They would say, ‘This man began to build but was not able to finish!’

³¹ “If a king is going to fight against another king, first he will sit down and plan. If the king has only 10,000 men, he will plan to see if he is able to defeat the other king who has 20,000 men. ³² If he cannot defeat the other king, then he will send some men to speak to the other king and ask for peace. ³³ In the same way, you must give up everything you have to follow me. If you don’t, you cannot be my follower!”

Don’t Lose Your Influence

³⁴ “Salt is a good thing. But if the salt loses its salty taste, then it is worth nothing. You cannot make it salty again. ³⁵ It is no

good for the soil or for manure. People throw it away.

"You people who hear me, listen!"

Joy in Heaven

15 Many tax collectors and "sinners" came to listen to Jesus. ²The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began to complain: "Look! This man welcomes sinners and even eats with them!"

³Then Jesus told them this story: ⁴"Suppose one of you has 100 sheep, but he loses one of them. Then he will leave the other 99 sheep alone and go out and look for the lost sheep. The man will keep on searching for the lost sheep until he finds it. ⁵And when he finds it, the man is very happy. He puts it on his shoulders ⁶and goes home. He calls to his friends and neighbors and says, 'Be happy with me because I found my lost sheep!' ⁷In the same way, I tell you, there is much joy in heaven when one sinner changes his heart. There is more joy for that one sinner than there is for 99 good people who don't need to change.

⁸"Suppose a woman has ten silver coins, but she loses one of them. She will light a lamp and clean the house. She will look carefully for the coin until she finds it. ⁹And when she finds it, she will call her friends and neighbors and say, 'Be happy with me because I have found the coin that I lost!' ¹⁰In the same way, there is joy before the angels of God when one sinner changes his heart."

The Son Who Left Home

¹¹Then Jesus said, "A man had two sons. ¹²The younger son said to his father, 'Give me my share of the property.' So the father divided the property between his two sons. ¹³Then the younger son gathered up all that was his and left. He traveled far away to another country. There he wasted his money in foolish living. ¹⁴He spent everything that he had. Soon after that, there was not enough food to eat anywhere in the country, and the son was hungry. ¹⁵So he got a job with one of the citizens there. The man sent the son into the fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶The son was so hungry that he was willing to eat the food the

pigs were eating. But no one gave him anything. ¹⁷The son realized that he had been very foolish. He thought, 'All of my father's servants have plenty of food. But I am here, almost dying with hunger. ¹⁸I will leave and return to my father. I'll say to him: Father, I have sinned against God and have done wrong to you. ¹⁹I am not good enough to be called your son. But let me be like one of your servants.' ²⁰So the son left and went to his father."

The Son Returns

"While the son was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. He felt sorry for his son. So the father ran to him, and hugged and kissed him. ²¹The son said, 'Father, I have sinned against God and have done wrong to you. I am not good enough to be called your son.'" ²²But the father said to his servants, 'Hurry! Bring the best clothes and put them on him. Also, put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. ²³And get our fat calf and kill it. Then we can have a feast and celebrate! ²⁴My son was dead, but now he is alive again! He was lost, but now he is found!' So they began to celebrate."

The Older Son Comes

²⁵"The older son was in the field. As he came closer to the house, he heard the sound of music and dancing. ²⁶So he called to one of the servants and asked, 'What does all this mean?' ²⁷The servant said, 'Your brother has come back. Your father killed the fat calf to eat because your brother came home safely!' ²⁸The older son was angry and would not go in to the feast. So his father went out and begged him to come in. ²⁹The son said to his father, 'I have served you like a slave for many years! I have always obeyed your commands. But you never even killed a young goat for me to have a feast with my friends. ³⁰But your other son has wasted all your money on prostitutes. Then he comes home, and you kill the fat calf for him!' ³¹The father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me. All that I have is yours. ³²We had to celebrate and be happy, because your brother was dead, but now he is alive. He was lost, but now he is found.'"

^{21a} Some Greek copies add *Make me like one of your hired men.*

True Wealth

16 Jesus also said to his followers, "Once there was a rich man. He had a manager to take care of his business. Later, the rich man learned that his manager was cheating him. ²So he called the manager in and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give me a report of what you have done with my money. You can't be my manager any longer!' ³Later, the manager thought to himself, 'What will I do? My master is taking my job away from me! I am not strong enough to dig ditches, and I am too proud to beg. ⁴I know! I'll do something so that when I lose my job, people will welcome me into their homes.'

⁵So the manager called in everyone who owed the master any money. He said to the first man, 'How much do you owe my master?' ⁶The man answered, 'I owe him 800 gallons of olive oil.' The manager said to him, 'Here is your bill; sit down quickly and make the bill less. Write 400 gallons.' ⁷Then the manager said to another man, 'How much do you owe my master?' The man answered, 'I owe him 1,000 bushels of wheat.' Then the manager said to him, 'Here is your bill; you can make it less. Write 800 bushels.' ⁸Later, the master praised the dishonest manager for being smart. Yes, worldly people are smarter with their own kind than spiritual people are.

⁹"I tell you, make friends for yourselves with worldly riches. Then, when those things are gone, you will be welcomed in that home that continues forever. ¹⁰Whoever can be trusted with small things can also be trusted with large things. Whoever is dishonest in little things will be dishonest in large things too. ¹¹If you cannot be trusted with worldly riches, then you will not be trusted with the true [heavenly] riches. ¹²And if you cannot be trusted with the things that belong to someone else, then you will not be given things of your own.

¹³"No servant can serve two masters. He will hate one master and love the other. Or he will follow one master and refuse to follow the other. You cannot serve both God and money."

God's Law Cannot Be Changed

¹⁴The Pharisees were listening to all these things. They made fun of Jesus because they all loved money. ¹⁵Jesus said to them,

"You make yourselves look good in front of people. But God knows what is really in your hearts. The things that are important to people are worth nothing to God.

¹⁶"God wanted the people to live by the law of Moses and the writings of the prophets. But ever since John came, the Good News about the kingdom of God is being told. Now everyone is trying hard to get into the kingdom. ¹⁷Even the smallest part of a letter in the law cannot be changed. It would be easier for heaven and earth to pass away."

Divorce and Remarriage

¹⁸"If a man divorces his wife and marries another woman, he is guilty of the sin of adultery. And the man who marries a divorced woman is also guilty of adultery."

The Rich Man and Lazarus

¹⁹Jesus said, "There was a rich man who dressed in the finest clothes and lived in luxury every day. ²⁰There was also a very poor man named Lazarus, whose body was covered with sores. Lazarus was placed at the rich man's gate. ²¹He wanted to eat only the small pieces of food that fell from the rich man's table. And the dogs would come and lick his sores! ²²Later, Lazarus died. The angels took Lazarus and placed him in the arms of Abraham. The rich man died, too, and was buried. ²³In the place of death^a he had much pain. The rich man saw Abraham far away with Lazarus in his arms. ²⁴He called, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me! Send Lazarus to me so that he can dip his finger in water and cool my tongue. I am suffering in this fire!' ²⁵But Abraham said, 'My son, remember when you lived? You had all the good things in life, but all the bad things happened to Lazarus. Now Lazarus is comforted here, and you are suffering. ²⁶Also, there is a big pit between you and us. No one can cross over to help you. And no one can leave there and come here.' ²⁷The rich man said, 'Then please send Lazarus to my father's house on earth! ²⁸I have five brothers. Lazarus could warn my brothers so that they will not come to this place of pain.' ²⁹But Abraham said, 'They have the law of Moses and the writings of the prophets

^{23a} Or *Hades*.

to read; let them learn from them!’ ³⁰The rich man said, ‘No, father Abraham! If someone came to them from the dead, they would believe and change their hearts and lives.’ ³¹But Abraham said to him, ‘No! If your brothers won’t listen to Moses and the prophets, then they won’t listen to someone who comes back from death.’”

Sin and Forgiveness

17 Jesus said to his followers, “Things will surely happen that cause people to sin. But how terrible for the one who causes them to happen. ²It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a large rock around his neck than to cause one of these weak people to sin. ³So be careful!

“If your brother sins, tell him he is wrong. But if he is sorry and stops sinning, forgive him. ⁴If your brother sins against you seven times in one day, but he says that he is sorry each time, then forgive him.”

How Big Is Your Faith?

⁵The apostles said to the Lord, “Give us more faith!”

⁶The Lord said, “If your faith is as big as a mustard seed, then you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Dig yourself up and plant yourself in the sea!’ And the tree will obey you.”

Be Good Servants

⁷“Suppose one of you has a servant who has been plowing the ground or caring for the sheep. When the servant comes in from working in the field, would you say, ‘Come in and sit down to eat’? ⁸No, you would say to your servant, ‘Prepare something for me to eat. Then get yourself ready and serve me. When I finish eating and drinking, then you can eat.’ ⁹The servant does not get any special thanks for doing what his master told him to do. ¹⁰It is the same with you. When you do everything you are told to do, you should say, ‘We don’t deserve any special thanks. We have only done the work we should do.’”

Be Thankful

¹¹Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. Traveling between Samaria and Galilee, ¹²he came into a small town. Ten men met

him there, but they did not come close to Jesus, because they all had leprosy. ¹³But they called to him, "Jesus! Master! Please help us!"

¹⁴When Jesus saw the men, he said, "Go and show yourselves to the priests."

While the ten men were going, they were healed. ¹⁵When one of them saw that he was healed, he went back to Jesus. He praised God in a loud voice. ¹⁶Then he bowed down at Jesus' feet and thanked him. (This man was a Samaritan.) ¹⁷Jesus asked, "Ten men were healed; where are the other nine? ¹⁸Is this Samaritan the only one who came back to thank God?" ¹⁹Then Jesus said to him, "Stand up and go on your way. You were healed because you believed."

God's Kingdom Is Within You

²⁰Some of the Pharisees asked Jesus, "When will the kingdom of God come?"

Jesus answered, "God's kingdom is coming, but not in a way that you will be able to see with your eyes. ²¹People will not say, 'Look, God's kingdom is here!' Or, 'There it is!' No, God's kingdom is within you."

²²Then Jesus said to his followers, "The time will come when you will want very much to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not be able. ²³People will say to you, 'Look, there he is!' or, 'Look, here he is!' Stay where you are; don't go away and search."

When Jesus Comes Again

²⁴"The Son of Man will come again. On the day he comes he will shine like lightning flashes across the sky and lights it up from one side to the other. ²⁵But first, the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the people of this time. ²⁶When the Son of Man comes again, it will be as it was when Noah lived. ²⁷In the time of Noah, people were eating, drinking, and getting married even on the day when Noah entered the boat. Then the flood came and killed all the people. ²⁸It will be the same as during the time of Lot. Those people were eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, and building. ²⁹They were doing these things even on the day Lot left Sodom. Then

fire and sulfur rained down from the sky and killed them all.

³⁰This is exactly how it will be when the Son of Man comes again.

³¹"On that day, if a man is on his roof, he will not have time to go inside and get his things. If a man is in the field, he cannot go back home. ³²Remember what happened to Lot's wife?

³³Whoever tries to save his life will lose it. But whoever gives his life away will save it. ³⁴At the time when I come again, there may be two people sleeping in one bed. One will be taken and the other will be left. ³⁵There may be two women grinding grain together. One will be taken and the other will be left." ³⁶

³⁷The followers asked Jesus, "Where will this be, Lord?"

Jesus answered, "People can always find a dead body by looking for the vultures."

God Will Answer His People

18 Then Jesus used this story to teach his followers that they should always pray and never lose hope. ²"Once there was a judge in a town. He did not care about God. He also did not care what people thought about him. ³In that same town there was a widow who kept coming to this judge. She said, 'There is a man who is doing me wrong. Give me my rights!' ⁴But the judge did not want to help the widow. After a long time, he thought to himself, 'I don't care about God. And I don't care about what people think. ⁵But this widow is bothering me. I will see that she gets her rights, or she will bother me until I am worn out!'"

⁶The Lord said, "Listen to what the bad judge says. ⁷God's people cry to him night and day. God will always give them what is right, and he will not be slow to answer them. ⁸I tell you, God will help his people quickly! But when the Son of Man comes again, will he find those on earth who believe in him?"

Being Right with God

⁹There were some people who thought that they were very good and looked down on everyone else. Jesus used this story

³⁶ ^a A few Greek copies add verse 36: *Two men will be in the same field. One man will be taken, but the other man will be left behind.*

to teach them: ¹⁰“There was a Pharisee and a tax collector. Both went to the temple to pray. ¹¹The Pharisee stood alone, away from the tax collector. When the Pharisee prayed, he said, ‘O God, I thank you that I am not as bad as other people. I am not like men who steal, cheat, or are guilty of adultery. I thank you that I am better than this tax collector. ¹²I fast twice a week, and I give one-tenth of everything I earn!’

¹³“The tax collector stood at a distance. When he prayed, he would not even look up to heaven. He beat on his breast and said, ‘O God, have mercy on me. I am a sinner!’ ¹⁴I tell you, when this man went home, he was right with God. But the Pharisee was not right with God. Everyone who makes himself great will be made humble. But everyone who makes himself humble will be made great.”

Who Will Enter God's Kingdom?

¹⁵Some people brought their small children to Jesus so that he could touch them. When the followers saw this, they told the people not to do this. ¹⁶But Jesus called the little children to him and said to his followers, “Let the little children come to me. Don’t stop them, because the kingdom of God belongs to people who are like these little children. ¹⁷I tell you the truth. You must accept God’s kingdom like a little child, or you will never enter it!”

A Rich Man Asks Jesus a Question

¹⁸A leader asked Jesus, “Good Teacher, what must I do to get the life that continues forever?”

¹⁹Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? Only God is good. ²⁰You know the commandments: ‘You must not be guilty of adultery, you must not murder, you must not steal, you must not lie, you must honor your father and mother . . .’”

²¹But the leader said, “I have obeyed all these commands since I was a boy!”

²²When Jesus heard this, he said to him, “But there is still one more thing you need to do. Sell everything you have and give the money to the poor. You will have a reward in heaven.

^{20a} Exodus 20:12-16; Deuteronomy 5:16-20.

Then come and follow me!" ²³But when the man heard this, he became very sad, because he was very rich.

²⁴When Jesus saw that the man was sad, he said, "It will be very hard for rich people to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵It would be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God!"

Who Can Be Saved?

²⁶When the people heard this, they asked, "Then who can be saved?"

²⁷Jesus answered, "God can do things that are not possible for men to do!"

²⁸Peter said, "Look, we left everything we had and followed you!"

²⁹Jesus said, "I tell you the truth. Everyone who has left his house, wife, brothers, parents, or children for God's kingdom ³⁰will get much more than he left. He will receive many times more in this life. And after he dies, he will live with God forever."

Jesus Will Rise from Death

³¹Then Jesus talked to the 12 apostles alone. He said to them, "Listen! We are going to Jerusalem. Everything that God told the prophets to write about the Son of Man will happen! ³²He will be turned over to the non-Jewish people. They will laugh at him, insult him, and spit on him. ³³They will beat him with whips and then kill him. But on the third day after his death, he will rise to life again." ³⁴The apostles tried to understand this, but they could not; the meaning was hidden from them.

Jesus Heals a Blind Man

³⁵Jesus was coming near the city of Jericho. There was a blind man sitting beside the road, begging for money. ³⁶When he heard the people coming down the road, he asked, "What is happening?"

³⁷They told him, "Jesus, the one from Nazareth, is coming here."

³⁸The blind man cried out, "Jesus, Son of David! Please help me!"

³⁹The people who were in front, leading the group, told the blind man to be quiet. But the blind man shouted more and more, "Son of David, please help me!"

⁴⁰Jesus stopped and said, "Bring the blind man to me!" When he came near, Jesus asked him, ⁴¹"What do you want me to do for you?"

He said, "Lord, I want to see again."

⁴²Jesus said to him, "Then see! You are healed because you believed."

⁴³At once the man was able to see, and he followed Jesus, thanking God. All the people who saw this praised God.

Zacchaeus

19 Jesus was going through the city of Jericho. ²In Jericho there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a wealthy, very important tax collector. ³He wanted to see who Jesus was, but he was too short to see above the crowd. ⁴He ran ahead to a place where he knew Jesus would come. He climbed a sycamore tree so he could see Jesus. ⁵When Jesus came to that place, he looked up and saw Zacchaeus in the tree. He said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down! I must stay at your house today."

⁶Zacchaeus came down quickly. He was delighted to have Jesus in his house. ⁷All the people saw this and began to complain, "Look at the kind of man Jesus stays with. Zacchaeus is a sinner!"

⁸But Zacchaeus said to the Lord, "I will give half of my money to the poor. If I have cheated anyone, I will pay that person back four times more!"

⁹Jesus said, "Salvation has come to this house today. This man truly belongs to the family of Abraham. ¹⁰The Son of Man came to find lost people and save them."

Use the Things God Gives You

¹¹Jesus traveled closer to Jerusalem. Some of the people thought that God's kingdom would appear soon. ¹²Jesus knew that the people thought this, so he told them this story: "A very important man was preparing to go to a country far away, to be made a king. Then he planned to return home and rule:

is people. ¹³So the man called ten of his servants together. He gave a bag of money to each servant. He said, 'Do business with this money till I get back.' ¹⁴But the people in the kingdom hated the man. So they sent a group to follow him and say, 'We don't want this man to be our king!'

¹⁵"But the man became king. When he came home, he said, 'Call those servants who have my money. I want to know how much they earned with it.'

¹⁶The first servant came and said, 'Sir, I earned ten bags of money with the one bag you gave me!' ¹⁷The king said to the servant, 'Fine! You are a good servant. I see that I can trust you with small things. So now I will let you rule over ten of my cities.' ¹⁸The second servant said, 'Sir, with your one bag of money I earned five bags!' ¹⁹The king said to this servant, 'You can rule over five cities.' ²⁰Then another servant came in. The servant said to the king, 'Sir, here is your bag of money. I wrapped it in a piece of cloth and hid it.' ²¹I was afraid of you because you are a hard man. You even take money that you didn't earn and gather food that you didn't plant.' ²²Then the king said to the servant, 'You evil servant! I will use your own words to condemn you. You said that I am a hard man. You said that I even take money that I didn't earn and gather food that I didn't plant.' ²³If that is true, then you should have put my money in the bank. Then, when I came back, my money would have earned some interest.' ²⁴Then the king said to the men who were watching, 'Take the bag of money away from this servant and give it to the servant who earned ten bags of money.' They said to the king, 'But sir, that servant already has ten bags of money!' ²⁶The king said, 'The one who uses what he has will get more. But the one who does not use what he has will have everything taken away from him.' ²⁷Now where are my enemies who didn't want me to be king? Bring them here and kill them before me.'"

Jesus Enters Jerusalem

²⁸After Jesus said this, he went on toward Jerusalem. ²⁹Jesus came near Bethphage and Bethany, towns near the hill called the Mount of Olives. Then he sent out two of his followers. ³¹He said, "Go into the town you can see there. When you enter

it, you will find a colt tied there. No one has ever ridden this colt. Untie it, and bring it here to me. ³¹If anyone asks you why you are taking it, say, 'The Master needs it.'"

³²The two followers went into town. They found the colt just as Jesus told them. ³³The followers untied it, but the owners of the colt came out. They asked the followers, "Why are you untying our colt?"

³⁴The followers answered, "The Master needs it." ³⁵So they brought it to Jesus. They threw their coats on the colt's back and put Jesus on it. ³⁶As Jesus rode toward Jerusalem, the followers spread their coats on the road before him.

³⁷Jesus was coming close to Jerusalem. He was already near the bottom of the Mount of Olives. The whole crowd of followers was very happy. They began shouting praise to God for all the powerful works they had seen. They said,

³⁸"God bless the king who comes
in the name of the Lord!

There is peace in heaven and glory to God!"

³⁹Some of the Pharisees said to Jesus, "Teacher, tell your followers not to say these things!"

⁴⁰But Jesus answered, "I tell you, if my followers don't say these things, then the stones will cry out."

Jesus Cries for Jerusalem

⁴¹Jesus came near Jerusalem. He saw the city and began to cry for it. ⁴²Jesus said to Jerusalem, "I wish you knew today what would bring you peace! But you can't know it, because it is hidden from you. ⁴³A time is coming when your enemies will build a wall around you and will hold you in on all sides. ⁴⁴They will destroy you and all your people. Not one stone of your buildings will be left on another. All this will happen because you did not know the time when God came to save you."

Jesus Goes to the Temple

⁴⁵Jesus went into the temple. He began to throw out the people who were selling things there. ⁴⁶He said, "It is written, 'My house will be a house of prayer.'^a But you have changed it into a 'hiding place for thieves'^b!"

^{46a} Isaiah 56:7. ^{46b} Jeremiah 7:11.

⁴⁷Jesus taught in the temple every day. The leading priests, the teachers of the law, and some of the leaders of the people wanted to kill Jesus. ⁴⁸But all the people were listening closely to him and were interested in all the things he said. So the leading priests, the teachers of the law, and the leaders did not know how they could kill him.

The Jewish Leaders Ask Jesus a Question

20 One day Jesus was in the temple, teaching the people and telling them the Good News. The leading priests, teachers of the law, and older Jewish leaders came up to talk with him. ²They said, "Tell us! What authority do you have to do these things? Who gave you this authority?"

³Jesus answered, "I will ask you a question too. Tell me: 'When John baptized people, did that come from God or from man?'"

⁵The priests, the teachers of the law, and the Jewish leaders all talked about this. They said to each other, "If we answer, 'John's baptism was from God,' then Jesus will say, 'Then why did you not believe John?' 'But if we say, 'John's baptism was from man,' then all the people will kill us with rocks because they believe that John was a prophet.'" ⁷So they answered, "We don't know where it was from."

⁸So Jesus said to them, "Then I will not tell you by what authority I do these things!"

God Sends His Son

⁹Then Jesus told the people this story: "A man planted a field with grapevines. The man leased the land to some farmers. Then he went away for a long time. ¹⁰Later, it was time for the grapes to be picked. So the man sent a servant to those farmers to get his share of the grapes. But they beat the servant and sent him away with nothing. ¹¹Then he sent another servant, but they beat him too. They showed no respect for him and sent him away with nothing. ¹²So the man sent a third servant. The farmers hurt this servant badly and threw him out. ¹³The owner of the field said, 'What will I do now? I will send my son whom I love very much. Maybe they will respect him!' ¹⁴When they saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the owner's son.

This field will be his. If we kill him, then his field will be ours!"
¹⁵So the farmers threw the son out of the field and killed him.

"What will the owner of this field do?" ¹⁶He will come and kill those farmers! Then he will give the field to other farmers."

The people heard this story. They said, "No! Let this never happen!" ¹⁷But Jesus looked at them and said, "Then what does this verse mean:

'The stone that the builders did not want
became the cornerstone'?

Psalm 118:22

¹⁸Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken. If that stone falls on you, it will crush you!"

¹⁹The teachers of the law and the priests heard this story that Jesus told. They knew it was about them. So they wanted to arrest Jesus at once. But they were afraid of what the people would do.

The Jewish Leaders Try to Trick Jesus

²⁰So the teachers of the law and the priests waited for the right time to get Jesus. They sent some spies who acted as if they were good men. They wanted to trap Jesus in what he said, so they could hand him over to the authority and power of the governor. ²¹So the spies asked Jesus, "Teacher, we know that what you say and teach is true. You teach the same to all people. You always teach the truth about God's way. ²²Tell us, is it right that we pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

²³But Jesus knew that these men were trying to trick him. He said, ²⁴"Show me a coin. Whose name is on the coin? And whose picture is on it?"

They said, "Caesar's."

²⁵Jesus said to them, "Then give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. And give to God the things that are God's."

²⁶The men were so amazed at his answer that they could say nothing. They were not able to trap Jesus in anything he said before the people.

Some Sadducees Try to Trick Jesus

²⁷Some Sadducees came to Jesus. (Sadducees believe that people will not rise from death.) They asked, ²⁸"Teacher, Moses wrote that if a married man dies and had no children, then his

brother must marry the widow. Then they will have children for the dead brother. ²⁹One time there were seven brothers. The first brother married, but died. He had no children. ³⁰Then the second brother married the widow, and he died. ³¹And the third brother married the widow, and he died. The same thing happened with all the other brothers. They all died and had no children. ³²The woman was the last to die. ³³But all seven brothers married her. So when people rise from death, whose wife will she be?"

³⁴Jesus said to the Sadducees, "On earth, people marry each other. ³⁵But those who will be worthy to be raised from death and live again will not marry. ³⁶In that life they are like angels and cannot die. They are children of God, because they have been raised from death. ³⁷Moses clearly showed that the dead are raised to life. When Moses wrote about the burning bush, he said that the Lord is 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.'^a ³⁸God is the God of living people, not dead people. All people are alive to God."

³⁹Some of the teachers of the law said, "Teacher, your answer was good." ⁴⁰No one was brave enough to ask him another question.

Is the Christ the Son of David?

⁴¹Then Jesus said, "Why do people say that the Christ^b is the Son of David? ⁴²In the book of Psalms, David himself says:

'The Lord [God] said to my Lord [Christ]:

Sit by me at my right side,

⁴³until I put your enemies under your control.'^c

Psalm 110:1

⁴⁴David calls the Christ 'Lord.' But the Christ is also the son of David. How can both these things be true?"

Jesus Warns Against the Teachers of the Law

⁴⁵While all the people were listening, Jesus said to his followers, ⁴⁶"Be careful of the teachers of the law. They like to walk around wearing clothes that look important. And they love for people to show respect to them in the marketplaces. They love to have the most important seats in the synagogues and at the feasts. ⁴⁷But they cheat widows and steal their houses. Then

³⁷^a Exodus 3:6. ⁴¹^b Or Messiah. ⁴³^c Or until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.

they try to make themselves look good by saying long prayers. God will punish these men very much.”

True Giving

21 Jesus saw some rich people putting their gifts into the temple money box. ²Then Jesus saw a poor widow. She put two small copper coins into the box. ³He said, “I tell you the truth. This poor widow gave only two small coins. But she really gave more than all those rich people. ⁴The rich have plenty; they gave only what they did not need. But this woman, who is very poor, gave all she had to live on.”

The Destruction of the Temple

⁵Some of the followers were talking about the temple and how it was decorated with beautiful stones and gifts offered to God.

⁶But Jesus said, “The time will come when all that you see here will be destroyed. Every stone will be thrown down to the ground. Not one stone will be left on another!”

⁷Some followers asked Jesus, “Teacher, when will these things happen? What will show us that it is time for them to take place?”

⁸Jesus said, “Be careful! Don’t be fooled. Many people will come using my name. They will say, ‘I am [the Christ^a],’ and, ‘The right time has come!’ But don’t follow them. ⁹When you hear about wars and riots, don’t be afraid. These things must happen first. Then the end will come later.”

¹⁰Then he said to them, “Nations will fight against other nations. Kingdoms will fight against other kingdoms. ¹¹There will be great earthquakes, sicknesses, and other terrible things in many places. In some places there will be no food for the people to eat. Fearful events and great signs will come from heaven.

¹²“But before all these things happen, people will arrest you and persecute you. They will judge you in their synagogues and put you in jail. You will be forced to stand before kings and governors. They will do all these things to you because you follow me. ¹³But this will give you an opportunity to tell about me.

^a Or *Messiah*.

¹⁴Don't worry about what you will say. ¹⁵I will give you the wisdom to say things so that none of your enemies will be able to show that you are wrong. ¹⁶Even your parents, brothers, relatives and friends will turn against you. They will kill some of you. ¹⁷All people will hate you because you follow me. ¹⁸But none of these things can really harm you. ¹⁹You will save yourselves by continuing strong in your faith through all these things."

The Destruction of Jerusalem

²⁰"When you see armies all around Jerusalem, then you will know that the time for its destruction has come. ²¹At that time, the people in Judea should run away to the mountains. The people in Jerusalem must get out. If you are near the city, don't go in! ²²These are the days of punishment to make come true all that is written in the Scriptures. ²³How terrible it will be for women who are pregnant or have small babies. Great trouble will come upon this land, and God will be angry with these people. ²⁴Some will be killed by the sword and taken as prisoners to all nations. Jerusalem will be stamped down by non-Jewish people until their time is over."

Don't Fear

²⁵"Amazing things will happen to the sun, moon, and stars. On earth, nations will be afraid because of the roar and fury of the sea. They will not know what to do. ²⁶People will be so afraid they will faint. They will wonder what is happening to the whole world. Everything in the sky will be changed. ²⁷Then people will see the Son of Man coming on a cloud with power and great glory. ²⁸When these things begin to happen, don't fear. Look up and hold your heads high because the time when God will free you is near!"

My Words Will Live Forever

²⁹Then Jesus told this story: "Look at the fig tree and all the other trees. ³⁰When their leaves appear, you know that summer is near. ³¹In the same way, when you see all these things happening, you will know that God's kingdom is coming very soon.

³²"I tell you the truth. All these things will happen while the

people of this time" are still living! ³³The whole world, earth and sky, will be destroyed; but the words I have said will never be destroyed!"

Be Ready All the Time

³⁴"Be careful! Don't spend your time feasting and drinking. Or don't be too busy with worldly things. If you do that, you will not be able to think straight. And then that day might come when you are not ready. ³⁵It will close like a trap on all people on earth. ³⁶So be ready all the time. Pray that you will be strong enough to escape all these things that will happen. And pray that you will be able to stand before the Son of Man."

³⁷During the day, Jesus taught the people in the temple. At night he went out of the city and stayed on the Mount of Olives. ³⁸Every morning all the people got up early to go to the temple to listen to him.

The Jewish Leaders Want to Kill Jesus

22 It was almost time for the Jewish Feast of Unleavened Bread, called the Passover Feast. ²The leading priests and teachers of the law were trying to find a way to kill Jesus. But they were afraid of the people.

Judas Makes Plans Against Jesus

³One of Jesus' 12 apostles was named Judas Iscariot. Satan entered Judas, and he went to ⁴the leading priests and some of the soldiers who guarded the temple. He talked to them about a way to give Jesus to them. ⁵They were delighted and promised to give Judas money. ⁶Judas agreed. Then he waited for the best time to turn Jesus over to them without the crowd knowing it.

Preparation of the Passover Meal

⁷The Day of Unleavened Bread came. This was the day the Passover lambs had to be sacrificed. ⁸Jesus said to Peter and John, "Go and prepare the Passover meal for us to eat."

⁹They asked, "Where do you want us to prepare it?"

Jesus said to them, ¹⁰"Listen! After you go into the city, you

^{32a} Or race.

will see a man carrying a jar of water. Follow him into the house that he enters. ¹¹Tell the person who owns that house, 'The Teacher asks that you please show us the room where he and his followers may eat the Passover meal.' ¹²Then he will show you a large room upstairs. This room is ready for you. Prepare the Passover meal there."

¹³So Peter and John left. Everything happened as Jesus had said. So they prepared the Passover meal.

The Lord's Supper

¹⁴When the time came, Jesus and the apostles were sitting at the table. ¹⁵He said to them, "I wanted very much to eat this Passover meal with you before I die. ¹⁶I will never eat another Passover meal until it is given its true meaning in the kingdom of God."

¹⁷Then Jesus took a cup. He gave thanks to God for it and said, "Take this cup and give it to everyone here. ¹⁸I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine" until God's kingdom comes."

¹⁹Then Jesus took some bread. He thanked God for it, broke it, and gave it to the apostles. Then Jesus said, "This bread is my body that I am giving for you. Do this to remember me."

²⁰In the same way, after supper, Jesus took the cup and said, "This cup shows the new agreement which begins with my blood that is poured out for you."^b

Who Will Turn Against Jesus?

²¹Jesus said, "One of you will soon be against me. His hand is by my hand on the table. ²²The Son of Man will do what God has planned. But how terrible it will be for that man who gives the Son of Man to be killed."

²³Then the apostles asked each other, "Which one of us would do that to Jesus?"

Be Like a Servant

²⁴Later the apostles began to argue about which one of them was the most important. ²⁵But Jesus said to them, "The kings of the world rule over their people. Men who have authority over

¹⁸^a Or *wine*. ²⁰^b A few Greek copies do not have the last part of verse 19 and all of verse 20.

others are called 'very important.' ²⁶But you must not be like that. The greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the leader should be like the servant. ²⁷Who is more important: the one sitting at the table or the one serving him? You think the one at the table is more important. But I am like a servant among you!

²⁸"You men have stayed with me through many struggles. ²⁹My Father has given me the right to rule. I also give you authority to rule with me. ³⁰You will eat and drink at my table in my kingdom. You will sit on thrones and judge the 12 tribes of Israel."

Don't Lose Your Faith!

³¹"Satan has asked to test all of you as a farmer sifts his wheat. O Simon, Simon. ³²I have prayed that you will not lose your faith! Help your brothers be stronger when you come back to me."

³³But Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, I am ready to go to prison with you. I will even die with you!"

³⁴But Jesus said, "Peter, before the rooster crows tonight, you will say three times that you don't know me."

Be Ready for Trouble

³⁵Then Jesus said to the apostles, "When I sent you out without money, a bag, or shoes, did you need anything?"

They said, "No."

³⁶He said to them, "But now if you have money or a bag, carry that with you. If you don't have a sword, sell your coat and buy one. ³⁷The Scripture says:

'People said he was a criminal.'

Isaiah 53:12

This Scripture must have its full meaning. It was written about me, and it is happening now."

³⁸The followers said, "Look, Lord, here are two swords!"

He said to them, "That's enough."

Jesus Tells the Apostles to Pray

³⁹⁻⁴⁰Jesus left the city and went to the Mount of Olives. His followers went with him. (Jesus went there often.) He said to his followers, "Pray for strength against temptation."

⁴¹Then Jesus went about a stone's throw away from them. He kneeled down and prayed, ⁴²"Father, if it is what you want, then let me not have this cup of suffering. But do what you want, not what I want." ⁴³Then an angel from heaven appeared to him to help him. ⁴⁴Jesus was full of pain; he prayed even more. Sweat dripped from his face as if he were bleeding.^a ⁴⁵When he finished praying, he went to his followers. They were asleep because their sadness had made them very tired. ⁴⁶Jesus said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray for strength against temptation."

Jesus Is Arrested

⁴⁷While Jesus was speaking, a crowd came up. One of the 12 apostles was leading them. He was Judas. He came close to Jesus so that he could kiss him.

⁴⁸But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you using the kiss to give the Son of Man to his enemies?" ⁴⁹The followers of Jesus were standing there too. They saw what was happening and said to Jesus, "Lord, should we use our swords?" ⁵⁰And one of them did use his sword. He cut off the right ear of the servant of the high priest.

⁵¹Jesus said, "Stop!" Then he touched the servant's ear and healed him.

⁵²Those who came to arrest Jesus were the leading priests, the soldiers who guarded the temple, and the older Jewish leaders. Jesus said to them, "Why did you come out here with swords and sticks? Do you think I am a criminal? ⁵³I was with you every day in the temple. Why didn't you try to arrest me there? But this is your time—the time when darkness rules."

Peter Is Afraid to Say He Knows Jesus

⁵⁴They arrested Jesus and took him away. They brought him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed them, but he did not go near Jesus. ⁵⁵The soldiers started a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat together. Peter sat with them. ⁵⁶A servant girl saw Peter sitting there near the light. She looked closely at Peter's face and said, "This man was also with him!"

⁵⁷But Peter said this was not true. He said, "Girl, I don't know

⁴³⁻⁴⁴^a Some early Greek copies omit verses 43 and 44.

him.” ⁵⁸ A short time later, another person saw Peter and said, “You are also one of them.”

But Peter said, “Man, I am not!”

⁵⁹ About an hour later, another man insisted, “It is true! This man was with him. He is from Galilee!”

⁶⁰ But Peter said, “Man, I don’t know what you are talking about!”

Immediately, while Peter was still speaking, a rooster crowed. ⁶¹ Then the Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. And Peter remembered what the Lord had said: “Before the rooster crows tonight, you will say three times that you don’t know me.” ⁶² Then Peter went outside and cried with much pain in his heart.

The People Laugh at Jesus

^{63–64} The men who were guarding Jesus made fun of him. They covered his eyes. Then they hit him and said, “Prove that you are a prophet, and tell us who hit you!” ⁶⁵ The men said many cruel things to Jesus.

Jesus Before the Jewish Leaders

⁶⁶ When day came, the older leaders of the people, the leading priests, and the teachers of the law came together. They led Jesus away to their highest court. ⁶⁷ They said, “If you are the Christ,^a then tell us that you are!”

Jesus said to them, “If I tell you I am the Christ, you will not believe me. ⁶⁸ And if I ask you, you will not answer. ⁶⁹ But beginning now, the Son of Man will sit at the right side of God’s throne.”

⁷⁰ They all said, “Then are you the Son of God?” Jesus said to them, “Yes, you are right when you say that I am.”

⁷¹ They said, “Why do we need witnesses now? We ourselves heard him say this!”

Governor Pilate Questions Jesus

23 Then the whole group stood up and led Jesus to Pilate. ² They began to accuse Jesus. They told Pilate, “We caught this man telling things that were confusing our people.

^{67a} Or *Messiah*.

He says that we should not pay taxes to Caesar. He calls himself the Christ,^a a King."

³Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the King of the Jews?"

Jesus answered, "Yes, that is right."

⁴Pilate said to the leading priests and the people, "I find nothing wrong with this man."

⁵They said again and again, "But Jesus is making trouble with the people! He teaches all around Judea. He began in Galilee, and now he is here!"

Pilate Sends Jesus to Herod

⁶Pilate heard this and asked if Jesus was from Galilee. ⁷If so, Jesus was under Herod's authority. Herod was in Jerusalem at that time; so Pilate sent Jesus to him. ⁸When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad. He had heard about Jesus and had wanted to meet him for a long time. Herod was hoping to see Jesus work a miracle. ⁹Herod asked Jesus many questions, but Jesus said nothing. ¹⁰The leading priests and teachers of the law were standing there. They were shouting things against Jesus. ¹¹Then Herod and his soldiers made fun of Jesus. They dressed him in a kingly robe and then sent him back to Pilate. ¹²In the past, Pilate and Herod had always been enemies. But on that day they became friends.

Jesus Must Die

¹³Pilate called all the people together with the leading priests and the Jewish leaders. ¹⁴He said to them, "You brought this man to me. You said that he was making trouble among the people. But I have questioned him before you all, and I have not found him guilty of the things you say. ¹⁵Also, Herod found nothing wrong with him; he sent him back to us. Look, he has done nothing that deserves death. ¹⁶So, after I punish him, I will let him go free." ^{17b}

¹⁸But all the people shouted, "Kill him! Let Barabbas go free!" ¹⁹(Barabbas was a man who was in prison because he started a riot in the city. He also was guilty of murder.)

²⁰Pilate wanted to let Jesus go free. So he told this to the

^{2a} Or Messiah. ^{17b} A few Greek copies add verse 17: *Every year at the Passover Feast, Pilate had to release one prisoner to the people.*

crowd. ²¹But they shouted again, "Kill him! Kill him on a cross!"

²²A third time Pilate said to them, "Why? What wrong has he done? I can find no reason to kill him. So I will have him punished and set him free."

²³But they continued to shout. They demanded that Jesus be killed on the cross. Their yelling became so loud that ²⁴Pilate decided to give them what they wanted. ²⁵They wanted Barabbas to go free, the man who was in jail for starting a riot and for murder. Pilate let Barabbas go free and gave Jesus to them to be killed.

Jesus Is Killed on a Cross

²⁶The soldiers led Jesus away. At that time, there was a man coming into the city from the fields. His name was Simon, and he was from the city of Cyrene. The soldiers forced Simon to carry Jesus' cross and walk behind him.

²⁷A large crowd of people was following Jesus. Some of the women were sad and crying. ²⁸But Jesus turned and said to them, "Women of Jerusalem, don't cry for me. Cry for yourselves and for your children too! ²⁹The time is coming when people will say, 'Happy are the women who cannot have children! Happy are the women who have no babies to nurse.' ³⁰Then people will say to the mountains, 'Fall on us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!' ³¹If they act like this now when life is good, what will happen when bad times come?"^a

³²There were also two criminals led out with Jesus to be killed. ³³Jesus and the two criminals were taken to a place called "The Skull." There the soldiers nailed Jesus to his cross. They also nailed the criminals to their crosses, one beside Jesus on the right and the other beside Jesus on the left. ³⁴Jesus said, "Father, forgive them. They don't know what they are doing."^b

The soldiers threw dice to decide who would get Jesus' clothes. ³⁵The people stood there watching. The Jewish leaders made fun of Jesus. They said, "If he is God's Chosen One, the Christ,^c then let him save himself. He saved other people, didn't he?"

³⁶Even the soldiers made fun of him. They came to Jesus and

^{31a} Or *If they do these things in the green tree, what will happen in the dry?* ^{34b} Some early Greek copies do not have *Jesus said, "Father, forgive them. They don't know what they are doing."* ^{35c} Or *Messiah*.

offered him some wine. ³⁷They said, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" ³⁸(At the top of the cross these words were written: "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.")

³⁹One of the criminals began to shout insults at Jesus: "Aren't you the Christ? Then save yourself! And save us too!"

⁴⁰But the other criminal stopped him. He said, "You should fear God! You are getting the same punishment as he is! ⁴¹We are punished justly; we deserve to die. But this man has done nothing wrong!" ⁴²Then this criminal said to Jesus, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom!"

⁴³Then Jesus said to him, "Listen! What I say is true: Today you will be with me in Paradise!"

Jesus Dies

⁴⁴It was about noon, and the whole land became dark until three o'clock in the afternoon. ⁴⁵There was no sun! The curtain in the temple was torn into two pieces. ⁴⁶Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Father, I give you my spirit." After Jesus said this, he died.

⁴⁷The army officer there saw what happened and praised God, saying, "I know this was a good man!"

⁴⁸Many people had gathered there to watch this sight. When they saw what happened, they left, feeling very sad. ⁴⁹Those who were close friends of Jesus were there, and some women who had followed Jesus from Galilee. They all stood far away from the cross and watched.

Joseph of Arimathea

⁵⁰⁻⁵¹A man from the Jewish town of Arimathea was there, too. His name was Joseph. He was a good, religious man. He wanted the kingdom of God to come. Joseph was a member of the Jewish council, but he had not agreed when the other leaders decided to kill Jesus. ⁵²Joseph went to Pilate to ask for the body of Jesus. ⁵³So Joseph took the body down from the cross and wrapped it in cloth. Then he put Jesus' body in a tomb that was cut in a wall of rock. This tomb had never been used before. ⁵⁴This was late on Preparation Day. When the sun went down, the Sabbath day would begin.

⁵⁵The women who had come from Galilee with Jesus followed Joseph. They saw the tomb and saw inside where the body of Jesus was laid. ⁵⁶Then the women left to prepare perfumes and spices.

On the Sabbath day they rested, as the law of Moses commanded.

The Followers Learn That Jesus Has Risen from Death

24 Very early on the first day of the week, the women came to the tomb where Jesus' body was laid. They brought the spices they had prepared. ²They found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance of the tomb. ³They went in, but they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴While they were wondering about this, two men [angels] in shining clothes suddenly stood beside them. ⁵The women were very afraid; they bowed their heads to the ground. The men said to the women, "Why are you looking for a living person here? This is a place for the dead. ⁶Jesus is not here. He has risen from death! Do you remember what he said in Galilee? ⁷He said that the Son of Man must be given to evil men, be killed on a cross, and rise from death on the third day." ⁸Then the women remembered what Jesus had said.

⁹The women left the tomb and told all these things to the 11 apostles and the other followers. ¹⁰They were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and some other women. The women told the apostles everything that had happened at the tomb, ¹¹but they did not believe the women. It sounded like nonsense. ¹²But Peter got up and ran to the tomb. He looked in, but he saw only the cloth that Jesus' body had been wrapped in. Peter went away to be alone, wondering about what had happened.

On the Road to Emmaus

¹³That same day two of Jesus' followers were going to a town named Emmaus about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴They were talking about everything that had happened. ¹⁵While they were discussing these things, Jesus himself came near and began walking with them. ¹⁶But the two men were not allowed to rec-

ognize Jesus. ¹⁷Then he said, "What are these things you are talking about while you walk?"

The two men stopped. Their faces were very sad. ¹⁸The one named Cleopas answered, "You must be the only man in Jerusalem who does not know what just happened there."

¹⁹Jesus said to them, "What are you talking about?"

The men said, "It is about Jesus of Nazareth. He was a prophet from God to all the people. He said and did many powerful things. ²⁰Our leaders and the leading priests gave him up to be judged and killed. They nailed him to a cross. ²¹But we were hoping that he would free the Jews. It is now the third day since this happened. ²²And today some of our women told us some amazing things. Early this morning they went to the tomb, ²³but they did not find his body there. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels. The angels said that Jesus was alive! ²⁴So some of our group went to the tomb, too. They found it just as the women said, but they did not see Jesus."

²⁵Then Jesus said to them, "You are foolish and slow to realize what is true. You should believe everything the prophets said. ²⁶They said that the Christ^a must suffer these things before he enters his glory." ²⁷Then Jesus began to explain everything that had been written about himself in the Scriptures. He started with Moses, and then he talked about what all the prophets had said about him.

²⁸They came near the town of Emmaus and Jesus acted as if he did not plan to stop there. ²⁹But they begged him, "Stay with us. It is late; it is almost night." So he went in to stay with them.

³⁰Jesus sat down with them and took some bread. He gave thanks for the food and divided it. Then he gave it to them. ³¹And then, the men were allowed to recognize Jesus. But when they saw who he was, he disappeared. ³²They said to each other, "When Jesus talked to us on the road and explained the true meaning of the Scriptures, it felt like a fire burning in us."

³³So the two men got up at once and went back to Jerusalem. There they found the 11 apostles and others gathered. ³⁴They were saying, "The Lord really has risen from death! He showed himself to Simon."

²⁶^a Or *Messiah*.

³⁵Then the two men told what had happened on the road. They talked about how they recognized Jesus when he divided the bread.

Jesus Appears to His Followers

³⁶While the two men were telling this, Jesus himself stood among them. He said to them, "Peace be with you."

³⁷They were fearful and terrified. They thought they were seeing a ghost. ³⁸But Jesus said, "Why are you troubled? Why do you doubt what you see? ³⁹Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me. You can see that I have a living body; a ghost does not have a body like this."

⁴⁰After Jesus said this, he showed them his hands and feet. ⁴¹The followers were amazed and very happy. They still could not believe it. Jesus said to them, "Do you have any food here?" ⁴²They gave him a piece of cooked fish. ⁴³While the followers watched, Jesus took the fish and ate it.

⁴⁴He said to them, "Remember when I was with you before? I said that everything written about me must happen—everything in the law of Moses, the books of the prophets, and the Psalms."

⁴⁵Then Jesus opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶He said to them, "It is written that the Christ^a would be killed and rise from death on the third day. ^{47–48}You saw these things happen—you are witnesses. You must tell people to change their hearts and lives. If they do this, their sins will be forgiven. You must start at Jerusalem and preach these things in my name to all nations. ⁴⁹Listen! My Father has promised you something; I will send it to you. But you must stay in Jerusalem until you have received that power from heaven."

Jesus Goes Back to Heaven

⁵⁰Jesus led his followers out of Jerusalem almost to Bethany. He raised his hands and blessed them. ⁵¹While he was blessing them, he was separated from them and carried into heaven. ⁵²They worshiped him and then went back to the city very happy. ⁵³They stayed in the temple all the time, praising God.

^{46a} Or *Messiah*.

John

Christ Comes to the World

1 Before the world began, the Word^a was. The Word was with God. The Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning. ³All things were made through him, and nothing was made without him. ⁴In him there was life. That life was light for the people of the world. ⁵The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not put out the Light.

⁶There was a man named John who was sent by God. ⁷He came to tell people about the Light. Through him all could hear about the Light and believe. ⁸John was not the Light, but he came to tell people about the Light. ⁹The true Light that gives light to all was coming into the world.

¹⁰The Word was in the world. The world was made through him, but the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to the world that was his own, but his own people did not accept him. ¹²But some people did accept him. They believed in him. To them he gave the right to become children of God. ¹³They did not become his children in the human way. They were not born because of the desire or wish of some man. They were born of God.

¹⁴The Word became a man and lived among us. We saw his glory—the glory that belongs to the only Son^b of the Father. The Word was full of grace and truth. ¹⁵John told about him. He said, “This is the One I was talking about. I said, ‘The One who comes after me is greater than I am. He was living before me.’”

^{1a} Or *message*. ^{14b} Or *only begotten Son*.

¹⁶The Word was full of grace. From him we all received more and more blessings. ¹⁷The law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No man has ever seen God. But God the only Son^a is very close to the Father.^b And the Son has shown us what God is like.

John Tells People About Jesus

¹⁹The Jews in Jerusalem sent some priests and Levites to John. The Jews sent them to ask, "Who are you?"

²⁰John spoke freely and did not refuse to answer. He said clearly, "I am not the Christ."

²¹So they asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?"

He answered, "No, I am not Elijah."

Then they asked, "Are you the Prophet?"

He answered, "No, I am not the Prophet."

²²Then they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to tell those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

²³John told them in the words of the prophet Isaiah:

"I am the voice of a person shouting in the desert:

'Make a straight road ready for the Lord.'"

Isaiah 40:3

²⁴In the group of Jews who were sent, there were some Pharisees. ²⁵They said to John: "You say you are not the Christ. You say you are not Elijah or the Prophet. Then why do you baptize people?"

²⁶John answered, "I baptize people with water. But there is one here with you that you don't know. ²⁷He is the One who comes after me. I am not good enough to untie the strings on his shoes."

²⁸This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan River. This is where John was baptizing people.

²⁹The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him. John said, "Look, the Lamb of God. He takes away the sins of the world!

³⁰This is the One I was talking about. I said, 'A man will come after me, but he is greater than I am, because he was living before me.' ³¹Even I did not know who he was. But I came baptizing with water so that God's people^d could know who he is."

¹⁸^a Or the only begotten Son. ¹⁸^b Or But the only God is very close to the Father. Also, some Greek copies say, But the only Son is very close to the Father. ²⁰^c Or Messiah. ³¹^d Or Israel.

³²⁻³³ Then John said, "I did not know who the Christ was. But God sent me to baptize with water. And God told me, 'You will see the Spirit come down and rest on a man. He is the One who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.'" John said, "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven. The Spirit looked like a dove and rested on him. ³⁴ I have seen this happen. So I tell people: 'He is the Son of God.'"

The First Followers of Jesus

³⁵ The next day John was there again with two of his followers. ³⁶ He saw Jesus walking by and said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" ³⁷ The two followers heard John say this, so they followed Jesus. ³⁸ When Jesus turned and saw them following him, he asked, "What do you want?"

They said, "Rabbi, where are you staying?" ("Rabbi" means "Teacher.")

³⁹ Jesus answered, "Come with me and you will see." So the two men went with Jesus. They saw the place where Jesus was staying and stayed there with him that day. It was then about four o'clock.

⁴⁰ These two men followed Jesus after they heard about him from John. One of the men was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. ⁴¹ The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother, Simon. He said to Simon, "We have found the Messiah." ("Messiah" means "Christ.")

⁴² Then Andrew took Simon to Jesus. Jesus looked at Simon and said, "You are Simon, the son of John. You will be called Cephas." ("Cephas" means "Peter.")

⁴³ The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." ⁴⁴ Philip was from the town of Bethsaida, where Andrew and Peter lived. ⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and told him, "Remember that Moses wrote in the law about a man who was coming, and the prophets also wrote about him. We have found him. He is Jesus, Joseph's son, from Nazareth."

⁴⁶ But Nathanael said to Philip, "Nazareth! Can anything good come from Nazareth?"

Philip answered, "Come and see."

⁴⁷Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him. He said, "Here is truly one of God's people.^a There is nothing false in him."

⁴⁸Nathanael asked, "How do you know me?"

Jesus answered, "I saw you when you were under the fig tree. That was before Philip told you about me."

⁴⁹Then Nathanael said to Jesus, "Teacher, you are the Son of God. You are the King of God's people."

⁵⁰Jesus said to Nathanael, "You believe^b in me because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. But you will see greater things than this!" ⁵¹And Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth. You will all see heaven open. You will see 'angels of God going up and coming down'^c on the Son of Man."

The Wedding at Cana

2 Two days later there was a wedding in the town of Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there. ²Jesus and his followers were also invited to the wedding. ³When all the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."

⁴Jesus answered, "Dear woman, why come to me? My time has not yet come."

⁵His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you to do."

⁶In that place there were six stone water jars. The Jews used jars like these in their washing ceremony. Each jar held about 20 or 30 gallons.

⁷Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water." So they filled the jars to the top.

⁸Then he said to them, "Now take some out and give it to the master of the feast."

So the servants took the water to the master. ⁹When he tasted it, the water had become wine. He did not know where the wine came from, but the servants who brought the water knew. The master of the wedding called the bridegroom ¹⁰and said to him, "People always serve the best wine first. Later, after the guests have been drinking a lot, they serve the cheaper wine. But you have saved the best wine till now."

¹¹So in Cana of Galilee, Jesus did his first miracle. There he showed his glory, and his followers believed in him.

⁴⁷^a Or *Israel*. ⁵⁰^b Or *Do you believe* . . . ⁵¹^c Genesis 28:12.

Jesus in the Temple

¹²Then Jesus went to the town of Capernaum with his mother, brothers and followers. They all stayed in Capernaum for a few days. ¹³It was almost time for the Jewish Passover Feast. So Jesus went to Jerusalem. ¹⁴In the temple he found men selling cattle, sheep, and doves. He saw others sitting at tables, exchanging money. ¹⁵Jesus made a whip out of cords. Then he forced all these men, with the sheep and cattle, to leave the temple. He turned over the tables and scattered the money of the men who were exchanging it. ¹⁶He said to those who were selling pigeons, "Take these things out of here! Don't make my Father's house a place for buying and selling!"

¹⁷When this happened the followers remembered what was written:

"My excitement for your house
will destroy me."

Psalms 69:9

¹⁸The Jews said to Jesus, "Show us a miracle for a sign. Prove that you have the right to do these things."

¹⁹Jesus answered, "Destroy this temple and I will build it again in three days."

²⁰The Jews answered, "Men worked 46 years to build this temple! Do you really believe you can build it again in three days?"

²¹(But the temple Jesus meant was his own body. ²²After Jesus was raised from death, his followers remembered that Jesus had said this. Then they believed the Scripture and the words Jesus said.)

²³Jesus was in Jerusalem for the Passover Feast. Many people believed in him because they saw the miracles he did. ²⁴But Jesus did not trust himself to them because he knew them all.

²⁵He did not need anyone to tell him about people, because he knew what was in a person's mind.

Jesus and Nicodemus

3 There was a man named Nicodemus, who was one of the Pharisees. He was an important Jewish leader. ²One night Nicodemus came to Jesus and said, "Teacher, we know that you are a teacher sent from God. No one can do the miracles you do, unless God is with him."

³Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth. Unless one is born again,^a he cannot be in God's kingdom."

⁴Nicodemus said, "But if a man is already old, how can he be born again? He cannot enter his mother's body again. So how can he be born a second time?"

⁵But Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth. Unless one is born from water and the Spirit, he cannot enter God's kingdom. ⁶A person's body is born from his human parents. But a person's spiritual life is born from the Spirit. ⁷Don't be surprised when I tell you, 'You must all be born again.' ⁸The wind blows where it wants to go. You hear the wind blow. But you don't know where the wind comes from or where it is going. It is the same with every person who is born from the Spirit."

⁹Nicodemus asked, "How can all this be possible?"

¹⁰Jesus said, "You are an important teacher of God's people.^b But you still don't understand these things? ¹¹I tell you the truth. We talk about what we know. We tell about what we have seen. But you don't accept what we tell you. ¹²I have told you about things here on earth, but you do not believe me. So surely you will not believe me if I tell you about the things of heaven! ¹³The only one who has ever gone up to heaven is the One who came down from heaven—the Son of Man.^c

¹⁴"Moses lifted up the snake in the desert. It is the same with the Son of Man. The Son of Man must be lifted up too. ¹⁵Then everyone who believes in him can have eternal life."

¹⁶For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son.^d God gave his Son so that whoever believes in him may not be lost, but have eternal life. ¹⁷God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world guilty, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸He who believes in God's Son is not judged guilty. He who does not believe has already been judged guilty, because he has not believed in God's only Son. ¹⁹People are judged by this fact: The Light has come into the world, but men did not want light. They wanted darkness because they were doing evil things. ²⁰Everyone who does evil hates the light. He will not come to the light because it will show all the evil things he has done. ²¹But he who follows the true way

^{3a} Or *born from above*. ^{10b} Or *Israel*. ^{13c} Some Greek copies add *who is in heaven*. ^{16d} Or *his only begotten Son*; also in verse 18.

comes to the light. Then the light will show that the things he has done were done through God.

Jesus and John the Baptist

²²After this, Jesus and his followers went into the area of Judea. There Jesus stayed with his followers and baptized people. ²³John was also baptizing in Aenon, near Salim because there was plenty of water there. People were going there to be baptized. ²⁴(This was before John was put into prison.)

²⁵Some of John's followers had an argument with a Jew about religious washing. ²⁶So they came to John and said, "Teacher, remember the man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan River, the one you spoke about? He is baptizing, and everyone is going to him."

²⁷John answered, "A man can get only what God gives him. ²⁸You yourselves heard me say, 'I am not the Christ.' I am only the one God sent to prepare the way for him.' ²⁹The bride belongs only to the bridegroom. The friend who helps the bridegroom waits and listens for him. He is glad when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That is the same pleasure I have. And my time of joy is now here. ³⁰He [Jesus] must become greater. And I must become less important."

The One Who Comes from Heaven

³¹"The One [Christ] who comes from above is greater than all. He who is from the earth belongs to the earth and talks about things on the earth. But the One who comes from heaven is greater than all. ³²He tells what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts what he says. ³³The person who accepts what he says has proved that God is true. ³⁴God sent him, and he tells what God says. God gives him the Spirit fully. ³⁵The Father loves the Son and has given him power over everything. ³⁶He who believes in the Son has eternal life. But he who does not obey the Son will never have that life. God's anger stays with him."

Jesus Talks to a Woman in Samaria

4 The Pharisees heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more followers than John. ²(But really Jesus himself did not

^{28a} Or *Messiah*.

baptize people. His followers did the baptizing.) Jesus knew that the Pharisees had heard about him. ³So he left Judea and went back to Galilee. ⁴On the way he had to go through the country of Samaria.

⁵In Samaria Jesus came to the town called Sychar. This town is near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. ⁶Jacob's well was there. Jesus was tired from his long trip, so he sat down beside the well. It was about noon. ⁷A Samaritan woman came to the well to get some water. Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink." ⁸(This happened while Jesus' followers were in town buying some food.)

⁹The woman said, "I am surprised that you ask me for a drink. You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan." (Jews are not friends with Samaritans.)

¹⁰Jesus said, "You don't know what God gives. And you don't know who asked you for a drink. If you knew, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

¹¹The woman said, "Sir, where will you get that living water? The well is very deep, and you have nothing to get water with. ¹²Are you greater than Jacob, our father, who gave us this well? He drank from it himself. Also, his sons and flocks drank from this well."

¹³Jesus answered, "Every person who drinks this water will be thirsty again. ¹⁴But whoever drinks the water I give will never be thirsty again. The water I give will become a spring of water flowing inside him. It will give him eternal life."

¹⁵The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water. Then I will never be thirsty again. And I will not have to come back here to get more water."

¹⁶Jesus told her, "Go get your husband and come back here."

¹⁷The woman answered, "But I have no husband."

Jesus said to her, "You are right to say you have no husband. ¹⁸Really you have had five husbands. But the man you live with now is not your husband. You told the truth."

¹⁹The woman said, "Sir, I can see that you are a prophet. ²⁰Our fathers worshiped on this mountain. But you Jews say that Jerusalem is the place where people must worship."

^{9a} Or *Jews don't use things that Samaritans have used.*

²¹Jesus said, "Believe me, woman. The time is coming when you will not have to be in Jerusalem or on this mountain to worship the Father. ²²You Samaritans worship what you don't understand. We Jews understand what we worship. Salvation comes from the Jews. ²³The time is coming when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. That time is now here. And these are the kinds of worshipers the Father wants. ²⁴God is spirit. Those who worship God must worship in spirit and truth."

²⁵The woman said, "I know that the Messiah is coming." (Messiah is the One called Christ.) "When the Messiah comes, he will explain everything to us."

²⁶Then Jesus said, "He is talking to you now. I am he."

²⁷Just then his followers came back from town. They were surprised because they saw Jesus talking with a woman. But none of them asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?"

²⁸Then the woman left her water jar and went back to town. She said to the people, ²⁹"A man told me everything I have ever done. Come see him. Maybe he is the Christ!" ³⁰So the people left the town and went to see Jesus.

³¹While the woman was away, the followers were begging him, "Teacher, eat something!"

³²But Jesus answered, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about."

³³So the followers asked themselves, "Did somebody already bring Jesus some food?"

³⁴Jesus said, "My food is to do what the One who sent me wants me to do. My food is to finish the work that he gave me to do. ³⁵You say, 'Four more months to wait before we gather the grain.' But I tell you, open your eyes. Look at the fields that are ready for harvesting now. ³⁶Even now, the one who harvests the crop is being paid. He is gathering crops for eternal life. So now the one who plants can be happy along with the one who harvests. ³⁷It is true when we say, 'One person plants, but another harvests the crop.' ³⁸I sent you to harvest a crop that you did not work for. Others did the work, and you get the profit from their work."

³⁹Many of the Samaritans in that town believed in Jesus. They believed because of what the woman said: "He told me everything I have ever done." ⁴⁰The Samaritans came to Jesus and begged him to stay with them. So he stayed there two days. ⁴¹Many more believed because of the words he spoke.

⁴²They said to the woman, "First we believed in Jesus because of what you told us. But now we believe because we heard him ourselves. We know that this man really is the Savior of the world."

Jesus Heals an Official's Son

⁴³Two days later, Jesus left and went to Galilee. ⁴⁴(Jesus had said before that a prophet is not respected in his own country.)

⁴⁵When Jesus arrived in Galilee, the people there welcomed him. They had seen all the things he did at the Passover Feast in Jerusalem. They had been at the Passover Feast, too.

⁴⁶Jesus went to visit Cana in Galilee again. This is where he had changed the water into wine. One of the king's important officials lived in the city of Capernaum. This man's son was sick. ⁴⁷The man heard that Jesus had come from Judea and was now in Galilee. He went to Jesus and begged him to come to Capernaum and heal his son. His son was almost dead. ⁴⁸Jesus said to him, "You people must see miracles and wonderful works before you will believe in me."

⁴⁹The official said, "Sir, come before my child dies."

⁵⁰Jesus answered, "Go. Your son will live."

The man believed what Jesus told him and went home. ⁵¹On the way the man's servants came and met him. They told him, "Your son is well."

⁵²The man asked, "What time did my son begin to get well?"

They answered, "It was about one o'clock yesterday when the fever left him."

⁵³The father knew that one o'clock was the exact time that Jesus had said, "Your son will live." So the man and all his family believed in Jesus.

⁵⁴That was the second miracle that Jesus did after coming from Judea to Galilee.

Jesus Heals a Man at a Pool

5 Later Jesus went to Jerusalem for a Jewish feast. ²In Jerusalem there is a pool with five covered porches. In the Jewish language it is called Bethzatha. This pool is near the Sheep Gate. ³Many sick people were lying on the porches. Some were blind, some were crippled, and some were paralyzed.⁴ ⁵There was a man lying there who had been sick for 38 years. ⁶Jesus saw the man and knew that he had been sick for a very long time. So Jesus asked him, "Do you want to be well?"

⁷The sick man answered, "Sir, there is no one to help me get into the pool when the water starts moving. I try to be the first one into the water. But when I try, someone else always goes in before I can."

⁸Then Jesus said, "Stand up. Pick up your mat and walk."
⁹And immediately the man was well. He picked up his mat and began to walk.

The day all this happened was a Sabbath day. ¹⁰So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, "Today is the Sabbath. It is against our law for you to carry your mat on the Sabbath day."

¹¹But he answered, "The man who made me well told me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.'"

¹²Then they asked him, "Who is the man who told you to pick up your mat and walk?"

¹³But the man who had been healed did not know who it was. There were many people in that place, and Jesus had left.

¹⁴Later, Jesus found the man at the temple. Jesus said to him, "See, you are well now. But stop sinning or something worse may happen to you!"

¹⁵Then the man left and went back to the Jews. He told them that Jesus was the one who made him well.

¹⁶Jesus was doing this on the Sabbath day. So the Jews persecuted him. ¹⁷But Jesus said to them, "My Father never stops working, and so I work, too."

¹⁸This made the Jews try harder to kill him. They said, "First Jesus was breaking the law about the Sabbath day. Then he said

^{3d} Some Greek copies add *and they waited for the water to move*. A few later copies add verse 4: *Sometimes an angel of the Lord came down to the pool and stirred up the water. After the angel did this, the first person to go into the pool was healed from any sickness he had.*

that God is his own Father! He is making himself equal with God!"

Jesus Has God's Authority

¹⁹But Jesus said, "I tell you the truth. The Son can do nothing alone. The Son does only what he sees his Father doing. The Son does whatever the Father does. ²⁰The Father loves the Son, and the Father shows the Son all the things he himself does. But the Father will show the Son greater things than this to do. Then you will all be amazed. ²¹The Father raises the dead and gives them life. In the same way, the Son gives life to those he wants to. ²²Also, the Father judges no one. But the Father has given the Son power to do all the judging. ²³God did this so that all people will respect the Son the same way they respect the Father. He who does not respect the Son does not respect the Father. The Father is the One who sent the Son.

²⁴"I tell you the truth. Whoever hears what I say and believes in the One who sent me has eternal life. He will not be judged guilty. He has already left death and has entered into life. ²⁵I tell you the truth. The time is coming and is already here when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God. And those who hear will have life. ²⁶Life comes from the Father himself. So the Father has allowed the Son to give life. ²⁷And the Father has given the Son the power to judge because he is the Son of Man. ²⁸Don't be surprised at this. A time is coming when all who are dead and in their graves will hear his voice. ²⁹Then they will come out of their graves. Those who did good will rise and have life forever. But those who did evil will rise to be judged guilty."

Jesus Continues Talking to the Jews

³⁰"I can do nothing alone. I judge only the way I am told, so my judgment is right. I don't try to please myself. I try to please the One who sent me.

³¹"If I tell people about myself, then they will not accept what I say about myself. ³²But there is another who tells about me. And I know that the things he says about me are true.

³³"You have sent men to John. And he has told you about the

truth. ³⁴But I don't need a man to tell about me. I tell you this so that you can be saved. ³⁵John was like a burning and shining lamp. And you were happy to enjoy his light for a while.

³⁶"But I have a proof about myself that is greater than that of John. The things I do are my proof. These are the things my Father gave me to do. They show that the Father sent me. ³⁷And the Father who sent me has given proof about me himself. You have never heard his voice. You have never seen what he looks like. ³⁸His teaching does not live in you because you don't believe in the One that the Father sent. ³⁹You carefully study the Scriptures because you think that they give you eternal life. These are the same Scriptures that tell about me! ⁴⁰But you refuse to come to me to have that life.

⁴¹"I don't want praise from men. ⁴²But I know you—I know that you don't have God's love in you. ⁴³I have come from my Father—I speak for him. But you don't accept me. But when another person comes, speaking only for himself, you will accept him. ⁴⁴You like to have praise from each other. But you never try to get the praise that comes from the only God. So how can you believe? ⁴⁵Don't think that I will stand before the Father and say that you are wrong. Moses is the one who says that you are wrong. And he is the one that you hoped would save you. ⁴⁶If you really believed Moses, you would believe me because Moses wrote about me. ⁴⁷But you don't believe what Moses wrote. So how can you believe what I say?"

Jesus Feeds More than 5,000 People

6 After this, Jesus went across Lake Galilee (or, Lake Tiberias). ²Many people followed him because they saw the miracles he did to heal the sick. ³Jesus went up on a hill and there sat down with his followers. ⁴It was almost the time for the Jewish Passover Feast.

⁵Jesus looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him. He said to Philip, "Where can we buy bread for all these people to eat?" ⁶(Jesus asked Philip this question to test him. Jesus already knew what he planned to do.)

⁷Philip answered, "Two hundred silver coins wouldn't buy enough bread for each person here to have only a little piece."

⁸Another follower there was Andrew. He was Simon Peter's brother. Andrew said, ⁹"Here is a boy with five loaves of barley bread and two little fish. But that is not enough for so many people."

¹⁰Jesus said, "Tell the people to sit down." This was a very grassy place. There were about 5,000 men who sat down there. ¹¹Then Jesus took the loaves of bread. He thanked God for the bread and gave it to the people who were sitting there. He did the same with the fish. He gave them as much as they wanted.

¹²They all had enough to eat. When they had finished, Jesus said to his followers, "Gather the pieces of fish and bread that were not eaten. Don't waste anything." ¹³So they gathered up the pieces that were left. They filled 12 large baskets with the pieces that were left of the five barley loaves.

¹⁴The people saw this miracle that Jesus did. They said, "He must truly be the Prophet who is coming into the world."

¹⁵Jesus knew that the people planned to come and take him by force and make him their king. So he left and went into the hills alone.

Jesus Walks on the Water

¹⁶That evening Jesus' followers went down to Lake Galilee. ¹⁷It was dark now and Jesus had not yet come to them. The followers got into a boat and started across the lake to Capernaum. ¹⁸By now a strong wind was blowing, and the waves on the lake were getting bigger. ¹⁹They rowed the boat about three or four miles. Then they saw Jesus walking on the water, coming toward the boat. The followers were afraid. ²⁰But Jesus said to them, "Don't be afraid. It is I." ²¹Then they were glad to take him into the boat. At once the boat came to land at the place where they wanted to go.

The People Seek Jesus

²²The next day came. Some people had stayed on the other side of the lake. They knew that Jesus had not gone in the boat with his followers but that they had left without him. ²³And they knew that only one boat had been there. But then some boats came from Tiberias. They landed near the place where

the people had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks.

²⁴The people saw that Jesus and his followers were not there now. So they got into boats and went to Capernaum to find Jesus.

Jesus, the Bread of Life

²⁵The people found Jesus on the other side of the lake. They asked him, "Teacher, when did you come here?"

²⁶Jesus answered, "Are you looking for me because you saw me do miracles? No! I tell you the truth. You are looking for me because you ate the bread and were satisfied. ²⁷Earthly food spoils and ruins. So don't work to get that kind of food. But work to get the food that stays good always and gives you eternal life. The Son of Man will give you that food. God the Father has shown that he is with the Son of Man."

²⁸The people asked Jesus, "What are the things God wants us to do?"

²⁹Jesus answered, "The work God wants you to do is this: to believe in the One that God sent."

³⁰So the people asked, "What miracle will you do? If we can see a miracle, then we will believe you. What will you do? ³¹Our fathers ate the manna in the desert. This is written: 'God gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"

³²Jesus said, "I tell you the truth. Moses was not the one who gave you bread from heaven. But my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³God's bread is the One who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

³⁴The people said, "Sir, give us this bread always."

³⁵Then Jesus said, "I am the bread that gives life. He who comes to me will never be hungry. He who believes in me will never be thirsty. ³⁶But as I told you before, you have seen me, and still you don't believe. ³⁷The Father gives me my people. Every one of them will come to me, and I will always accept them. ³⁸I came down from heaven to do what God wants me to do. I did not come to do what I want to do. ³⁹I must not lose even one of those that God has given me, but I must raise them up on the last day. This is what the One who sent me wants me

to do. ⁴⁰Everyone who sees the Son and believes in him has eternal life. I will raise him up on the last day. This is what my Father wants."

⁴¹The Jews began to complain about Jesus. They complained because he said, "I am the bread that comes down from heaven."

⁴²The Jews said, "This is Jesus. We know his father and mother. He is only Joseph's son. How can he say, 'I came down from heaven'?"

⁴³But Jesus answered, "Stop complaining to each other. ⁴⁴The Father is the One who sent me. No one can come to me unless the Father draws him to me. And I will raise him up on the last day. ⁴⁵It is written in the prophets, 'God will teach all the people.'^a Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. ⁴⁶No one has seen the Father except the One who is from God. Only he has seen the Father. ⁴⁷I tell you the truth. He who believes has eternal life. ⁴⁸I am the bread that gives life. ⁴⁹Your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, but still they died. ⁵⁰Here is the bread that comes down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread, he will never die. ⁵¹I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh. I will give my flesh so that the people in the world may have life."

⁵²Then the Jews began to argue among themselves. They said, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

⁵³Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, you must eat the flesh of the Son of Man. And you must drink his blood. If you don't do this, then you won't have real life in you. ⁵⁴He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life. I will raise him up on the last day. ⁵⁵My flesh is true food. My blood is true drink. ⁵⁶Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me, and I live in him. ⁵⁷The Father sent me. The Father lives, and I live because of the Father. So he who eats me will live because of me. ⁵⁸I am not like the bread our ancestors ate. They ate that bread, but still they died. I am the bread that came down from heaven. He who eats this bread will live forever." ⁵⁹Jesus said all these things while he was teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

^{45 a} Isaiah 54:13.

The Words of Eternal Life

⁶¹The followers of Jesus heard this. Many of them said, "This teaching is hard. Who can accept it?"

⁶¹Jesus knew that his followers were complaining about this. So he said, "Does this teaching bother you? ⁶²Then will it also bother you to see the Son of Man going back to the place where he came from? ⁶³It is not the flesh that gives a person life. It is the spirit that gives life. The words I told you are spirit," and so they give life. ⁶⁴But some of you don't believe." (Jesus knew who did not believe. He knew this from the beginning. And he knew who would turn against him.) ⁶⁵Jesus said, "That is the reason I said, 'If the Father does not let a person come to me, then he cannot come.'"

⁶⁶After Jesus said this, many of his followers left him. They stopped following Jesus.

⁶⁷Jesus asked the 12 followers, "Do you want to leave, too?"

⁶⁸Simon Peter answered Jesus, "Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life. ⁶⁹We believe and know that you are the Holy One from God."

⁷⁰Then Jesus answered, "I chose all 12 of you. But one of you is a devil."

⁷¹Jesus was talking about Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. Judas was one of the 12. But later he was going to turn against Jesus.

Jesus and His Brothers

7 After this, Jesus traveled around the country of Galilee. He did not want to travel in Judea, because the Jews there wanted to kill him. ²It was time for the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles. ³So Jesus' brothers said to him, "You should leave here and go to Judea. Then your followers there can see the miracles you do. ⁴Anyone who wants to be well known does not hide what he does. If you are doing these things, show yourself to the world." ⁵(Even Jesus' brothers did not believe in him.) ⁶Jesus said to his brothers, "The right time for me has not yet come. But any time is right for you. ⁷The world cannot hate you. But it hates me, because I tell about the evil it does. ⁸So

^{63a} Or *Spirit*.

you go to the feast. I will not go now, because the right time for me has not yet come.” ⁹After saying this, Jesus stayed in Galilee.

¹⁰So Jesus’ brothers left to go to the feast. When they had gone, Jesus went, too. But he did not let people see him. ¹¹At the feast the Jews were looking for him. They said, “Where is that man?”

¹²There was a large crowd of people there. Many of them were whispering to each other about Jesus. Some said, “He is a good man.”

Others said, “No, he fools the people.” ¹³But no one was brave enough to talk about Jesus openly. They were afraid of the Jews.

Jesus Teaches at the Feast in Jerusalem

¹⁴The feast was about half over. Then Jesus went to the temple and began to teach. ¹⁵The Jews were amazed. They said, “This man has never studied in school. How did he learn so much?”

¹⁶Jesus answered, “The things I teach are not my own. My teaching comes from him who sent me. ¹⁷If anyone chooses to do what God wants, then he will know that my teaching comes from God. He will know that this teaching is not my own. ¹⁸He who teaches his own ideas is trying to get honor for himself. But he who tries to bring honor to the one who sent him—that person speaks the truth. There is nothing false in him. ¹⁹Moses gave you the law, but none of you obey that law. Why are you trying to kill me?”

²⁰The people answered, “A demon has come into you. We are not trying to kill you.”

²¹Jesus said to them, “I did one miracle and you are all amazed. ²²Moses gave you the law about circumcision. (But really Moses did not give you circumcision. Circumcision came from our ancestors.) And yet you circumcise a baby on a Sabbath day. ²³This shows that a baby can be circumcised on a Sabbath day to obey the law of Moses. So why are you angry at me for healing a person’s whole body on the Sabbath day? ²⁴Stop judging by the way things look! Be fair, and judge by what is really right.”

The People Wonder If Jesus Is the Christ

²⁵Then some of the people who lived in Jerusalem said, "This is the man they are trying to kill. ²⁶But he is teaching where everyone can see and hear him. And no one is trying to stop him. Maybe the leaders have decided that he really is the Christ." ²⁷But we know where this man is from. And when the real Christ comes, no one will know where he comes from."

²⁸Jesus was still teaching in the temple. He cried out, "Yes, you know me and you know where I am from. But I have not come by my own authority. I was sent by the One who is true. You don't know him. ²⁹But I know him. I am from him, and he sent me."

³⁰When Jesus said this, the people tried to take him. But no one was able to touch Jesus. It was not yet the right time. ³¹But many of the people believed in Jesus. They said, "When the Christ comes, will he do more miracles than this man has done?"

The Jews Try to Arrest Jesus

³²The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering these things about Jesus. So the leading priests and the Pharisees sent some temple guards to arrest him. ³³Then Jesus said, "I will be with you a little while longer. Then I will go back to the One who sent me. ³⁴You will look for me, but you will not find me. And you cannot come where I am."

³⁵The Jews said to each other, "Where will this man go so we cannot find him? Will he go to the Greek cities where our people live? Will he teach the Greek people there? ³⁶This man says, 'You will look for me but you will not find me.' He also says, 'You cannot come where I am.' What does this mean?"

Jesus Talks About the Holy Spirit

³⁷The last day of the feast came. It was the most important day. On that day Jesus stood up and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. ³⁸If a person believes in me, rivers of living water will flow out from his heart. This is what the Scripture says." ³⁹Jesus was talking about the

^{26a} Or *Messiah*.

Spirit. The Spirit had not yet been given because Jesus had not yet been raised to glory. But later, those who believed in Jesus would receive the Spirit.

The People Argue About Jesus

⁴⁰The people heard these things that Jesus said. Some of them said, "This man really is the Prophet."

⁴¹Others said, "He is the Christ."^a

Still others said, "The Christ will not come from Galilee. ⁴²The Scripture says that the Christ will come from David's family.^b And the Scripture says that the Christ will come from Bethlehem, the town where David lived." ⁴³So the people did not agree with each other about Jesus. ⁴⁴Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one tried to do this.

The Jewish Leaders Refuse to Believe in Jesus

⁴⁵The temple guards went back to the leading priests and the Pharisees. The priests and the Pharisees asked, "Why didn't you bring Jesus?"

⁴⁶The temple guards answered, "No one ever spoke as this man does."

⁴⁷The Pharisees answered, "So Jesus has fooled you too! ⁴⁸Have any of the leaders or the Pharisees believed in him? No! ⁴⁹But those people, who know nothing about the law, are under God's curse!"

⁵⁰But Nicodemus was there in that group. He was the one who had gone to see Jesus before. Nicodemus said, ⁵¹"Our law does not judge a man without hearing him. We cannot judge him until we know what he has done." ⁵²They answered, "Are you from Galilee too? Study the Scriptures. You will learn that no prophet comes from Galilee."

⁵³And everyone left and went home.

The Woman Caught in Adultery

8 Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. ²But early in the morning he went back to the temple. All the people came to Jesus, and he sat and taught them. ³The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought a woman there who had been caught in

⁴¹^a Or *Messiah*; also in verse 42. ⁴²^b Or *seed*.

adultery. They forced the woman to stand before the people. ⁴They said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught having sex with a man who is not her husband. ⁵The law of Moses commands that we kill with rocks every woman who does this. What do you say we should do?" ⁶They were asking this to trick Jesus, so that they could have some charge against him. But Jesus knelt down and started writing on the ground with his finger. ⁷They continued to ask Jesus their question. So he stood up and said, "Is there anyone here who has never sinned? The person without sin can throw the first rock at this woman." ⁸Then Jesus knelt down again and wrote on the ground.

⁹Those who heard Jesus began to leave one by one. The older men left first, and then the others. Jesus was left there alone with the woman standing before him. ¹⁰Jesus stood up again and asked her, "Woman, all of those people have gone. Has no one judged you guilty?"

¹¹She answered, "No one has judged me, sir."

Then Jesus said, "So I also don't judge you. You may go now, but don't sin again."^a

Jesus Is the Light of the World

¹²Later, Jesus talked to the people again. He said, "I am the light of the world. The person who follows me will never live in darkness. He will have the light that gives life."

¹³But the Pharisees said to Jesus, "When you talk about yourself, you are the only one to say these things are true. We cannot accept what you say."

¹⁴Jesus answered, "Yes, I am saying these things about myself, but they are true. I know where I came from. And I know where I am going. You don't know where I came from or where I am going. ¹⁵You judge me the way you would judge any man. I don't judge anyone. ¹⁶But if I judge, my judging is true because I am not alone. The Father who sent me is with me. ¹⁷Your own law says that when two witnesses say the same thing, then you must accept what they say. ¹⁸I am one of the witnesses who speaks about myself. And the Father who sent me is my other witness."

¹⁹They asked, "Where is your father?"

^{11a} The oldest and best Greek copies do not have verses 7:53–8:11.

Jesus answered, "You don't know me or my Father. But if you knew me, then you would know my Father, too." ²⁰Jesus said these things while he was teaching in the temple. He was near the place where the money that the people give is kept. But no one arrested him. The right time for Jesus had not yet come.

The Jews Don't Understand About Jesus

²¹Again, Jesus said to the people, "I will leave you. You will look for me, but you will die in your sins. You cannot come where I am going."

²²So the Jews asked, "Will Jesus kill himself? Is that why he said, 'You cannot come where I am going'?"

²³But Jesus said, "You people are from here below, but I am from above. You belong to this world, but I don't belong to this world. ²⁴So I told you, that you would die in your sins. Yes, you will die in your sins, if you don't believe that I am he."

²⁵They asked, "Then who are you?"

Jesus answered, "I am what I have told you from the beginning. ²⁶I have many things to say about you and to judge you for. But the One who sent me speaks the truth. And I tell people what I have heard from him."

²⁷The people did not understand that Jesus was talking to them about the Father. ²⁸So Jesus said to them, "You will lift up the Son of Man. Then you will know that I am he. You will know that I do nothing by my own authority. You will know that I say only what the Father has taught me. ²⁹The One who sent me is with me. I always do what is pleasing to him. So he has not left me alone." ³⁰While Jesus was saying these things, many people believed in him.

Jesus Talks About Freedom from Sin

³¹So Jesus said to the Jews who believed in him, "If you continue to obey my teaching, you are truly my followers. ³²Then you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

³³The Jews answered, "We are Abraham's children, and we have never been slaves. So why do you say that we will be free?"

³⁴Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth. Everyone who lives in sin is a slave to sin. ³⁵A slave does not stay with a family forever, but a son belongs to the family forever. ³⁶So if the Son makes you free, then you will be truly free. ³⁷I know you are Abraham's children. But you want to kill me because you don't accept my teaching. ³⁸I am telling you what my Father has shown me. But you do what your father has told you."

³⁹They answered, "Our father is Abraham."

Jesus said, "If you were really Abraham's children, you would do the things that Abraham did. ⁴⁰I am a man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. But you are trying to kill me. Abraham did nothing like that. ⁴¹So you are doing the things that your own father did."

But the Jews said, "We are not like children who never knew who their father was. God is our Father. He is the only Father we have."

⁴²Jesus said to them, "If God were really your Father, you would love me. I came from God and now I am here. I did not come by my own authority. God sent me. ⁴³You don't understand what I say because you cannot accept my teaching. ⁴⁴Your father is the devil. You belong to him and want to do what he wants. He was a murderer from the beginning. He was against the truth, for there is no truth in him. He is a liar, and he is like the lies he tells. He is the father of lies.⁴⁵ But I speak the truth. That is why you don't believe me. ⁴⁶Can any of you prove that I am guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? ⁴⁷He who belongs to God accepts what God says. But you don't accept what God says, because you don't belong to God."

Jesus Talks About Himself and Abraham

⁴⁸The Jews answered, "We say you are a Samaritan! We say a demon has come into you. Are we not right?"

⁴⁹Jesus answered, "I have no demon in me. I give honor to my Father, but you dishonor me. ⁵⁰I am not trying to get honor for myself. There is One who wants this honor for me, and he is the judge. ⁵¹I tell you the truth. If anyone obeys my teaching, he will never die."

⁵²The Jews said to Jesus, "Now we know that you have a demon in you! Even Abraham and the prophets died. But you say,

‘Whoever obeys my teaching will never die.’ ⁵³Do you think that you are greater than our father Abraham? Abraham died, and the prophets died, too. Who do you think you are?”

⁵⁴Jesus answered, “If I give honor to myself, that honor is worth nothing. The One who gives me honor is my Father. And you say that he is your God. ⁵⁵You don’t really know him, but I know him. If I said I did not know him, then I would be a liar as you are liars. But I do know him, and I obey what he says. ⁵⁶Your father Abraham was very happy that he would see my day. He saw that day and was glad.”

⁵⁷The Jews said to him, “What? You have never seen Abraham! You are not even 50 years old!”

⁵⁸Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth. Before Abraham was born, I am!” ⁵⁹When Jesus said this, the people picked up stones to throw at him. But Jesus hid himself, and then he left the temple.

Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind

9 As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been born blind. ²His followers asked him, “Teacher, whose sin caused this man to be born blind—his own sin or his parents’ sin?”

³Jesus answered, “It is not this man’s sin or his parents’ sin that made him blind. This man was born blind so that God’s power could be shown in him. ⁴While it is daytime, we must continue doing the work of the One who sent me. The night is coming, and no one can work at night. ⁵While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

⁶After Jesus said this, he spit on the ground and made some mud with it. He put the mud on the man’s eyes. ⁷Then he told the man, “Go and wash in the pool Siloam.” (Siloam means “Sent.”) So the man went to the pool and washed. When he came back, he was able to see.

⁸Some people had seen this man begging before. They and the man’s neighbors said, “Look! Is this the same man who always sits and begs?”

⁹Some said, “Yes! He is the one.” But others said, “No, he’s not the same man. He only looks like him.”

So the man himself said, “I am the man.”

¹⁰They asked, "What happened? How did you get your sight?"

¹¹He answered, "The man named Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. Then he told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed and came back seeing."

¹²They asked him, "Where is this man?"

The man answered, "I don't know."

The Pharisees Ask About the Man Jesus Healed

¹³Then the people took to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. ¹⁴The day Jesus had made mud and healed his eyes was a Sabbath day. ¹⁵So now the Pharisees asked the man, "How did you get your sight?"

He answered, "He put mud on my eyes. I washed, and now I can see."

¹⁶Some of the Pharisees were saying, "This man does not keep the Sabbath day. He is not from God!"

Others said, "But a man who is a sinner can't do miracles like these." So they could not agree with each other.

¹⁷They asked the man again, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened."

The man answered, "He is a prophet."

¹⁸The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and could now see again until they sent for the man's parents. ¹⁹They asked the parents, "Is this your son? You say that he was born blind. Then how does he see now?"

²⁰His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and we know that he was born blind. ²¹But we don't know how he can see now. We don't know who opened his eyes. Ask him. He is old enough to answer for himself." ²²His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews. The Jews had already decided that anyone who said that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue. ²³That is why his parents said, "He is old enough. Ask him."

²⁴So for the second time, the Jewish leaders called the man who had been blind. They said, "Give God the glory by telling the truth. We know that this man is a sinner."

²⁵He answered, "I don't know if he is a sinner. But one thing

^{22a} Or *Messiah*.

I do know. I was blind, and now I can see.”

²⁶The Jewish leaders asked, “What did he do to you? How did he make you see again?”

²⁷He answered, “I have already told you that, but you would not listen to me. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his followers, too?”

²⁸Then they insulted him and said, “You are his follower. We are followers of Moses. ²⁹We know that God spoke to Moses. But we don’t even know where this man comes from!”

³⁰The man answered, “This is a very strange thing. You don’t know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. ³¹We all know that God does not listen to sinners. But God listens to anyone who worships and obeys him. ³²Nobody has ever heard of anyone giving sight to a man born blind. ³³If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”

³⁴They answered, “You were born full of sin! Are you trying to teach us?” And they threw the man out.

Spiritual Blindness

³⁵Jesus heard that they had thrown him out. So Jesus found him and said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”

³⁶He asked, “Who is the Son of Man, sir? Tell me, so I can believe in him!”

³⁷Jesus said to him, “You have already seen him. The Son of Man is the one talking with you now.”

³⁸He said, “Yes, Lord, I believe!” Then he worshiped Jesus.

³⁹Jesus said, “I came into this world so that the world could be judged. I came so that the blind could see and so that those who see will become blind.”

⁴⁰Some of the Pharisees were near Jesus. When they heard him say this, they asked, “What? Are you saying that we are blind, too?”

⁴¹Jesus said, “If you were really blind, you would not be guilty of sin. But now that you say you can see, your guilt remains.”

The Shepherd and His Sheep

10 Jesus said, “I tell you the truth. The man who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs in some other

way, is a thief and a robber. ²The one who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³The man who guards the door opens it for him. And the sheep listen to the voice of the shepherd. He calls his own sheep, using their names, and he leads them out. ⁴He brings all of his sheep out. Then he goes ahead of them and leads them. They follow him because they know his voice. ⁵But they will never follow a stranger. They will run away from him because they don't know his voice." ⁶Jesus told the people this story, but they did not understand what it meant.

Jesus Is the Good Shepherd

⁷So Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth. I am the door for the sheep. ⁸All the people who came before me were thieves and robbers. The sheep did not listen to them. ⁹I am the door. The person who enters through me will be saved.^a He will be able to come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰A thief comes to steal and kill and destroy. But I came to give life—life in all its fullness.

¹¹"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep. ¹²The worker who is paid to keep the sheep is different from the shepherd who owns them. So when the worker sees a wolf coming, he runs away and leaves the sheep alone. Then the wolf attacks the sheep and scatters them. ¹³The man runs away because he is only a paid worker. He does not really care for the sheep.

¹⁴⁻¹⁵ "I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep, as the Father knows me. And my sheep know me, as I know the Father. I give my life for the sheep. ¹⁶I have other sheep that are not in this flock here. I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock and one shepherd. ¹⁷The Father loves me because I give my life. I give my life so that I can take it back again. ¹⁸No one takes it away from me. I give my own life freely. I have the right to give my life, and I have the right to take it back. This is what my Father commanded me to do."

¹⁹Again the Jews did not agree with each other because of these words Jesus said. ²⁰Many of them said, "A demon has

^{9a} Or *kept safe*.

come into him and made him crazy. Why listen to him?"

²¹But others said, "A man who is crazy with a demon does not say things like this. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

²²The time came for the Feast of Dedication at Jerusalem. This was during the winter. ²³Jesus was in the temple at Solomon's Porch. ²⁴The Jews gathered around him and said, "How long will you make us wonder about you? If you are the Christ," then tell us plainly."

The Jews Against Jesus

²⁵Jesus answered, "I told you already, but you did not believe. I do miracles in my Father's name. Those miracles show who I am. ²⁶But you don't believe because you are not my sheep. ²⁷My sheep listen to my voice. I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸I give them eternal life, and they will never die. And no person can steal them out of my hand. ²⁹My Father gave my sheep to me. He is greater than all,^b and no person can steal my sheep out of my Father's hand. ³⁰The Father and I are one."

³¹Again the Jews picked up stones to kill Jesus. ³²But Jesus said to them, "I have done many good works from the Father. Which of these good works are you killing me for?"

³³The Jews answered, "We are not killing you for any good work you did. But you say things that are against God. You are only a man, but you say you are the same as God!"

³⁴Jesus answered, "It is written in your law that God said, 'You are gods!' ³⁵This Scripture called those people gods, the people who received God's message. And Scripture is always true. ³⁶So why do you say that I speak against God because I said, 'I am God's Son'? I am the one God chose and sent into the world. ³⁷If I don't do what my Father does, then don't believe me. ³⁸But if I do what my Father does, even though you don't believe in me, believe what I do. Then you will know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father."

³⁹The Jews tried to take Jesus again, but he escaped from them.

^{24a} Or *Messiah*. ^{29b} Many early Greek copies say *What my Father has given me is greater than all*.
^{34c} Psalm 82:6.

⁴⁰Then Jesus went back across the Jordan River to the place where John had first baptized. Jesus stayed there, ⁴¹and many people came to him. They said, "John never did a miracle. But everything John said about this man is true." ⁴²And in that place many believed in Jesus.

The Death of Lazarus

11 There was a man named Lazarus who was sick. He lived in the town of Bethany, where Mary and her sister Martha lived. ²Mary is the woman who later put perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair. Mary's brother was Lazarus, the man who was now sick. ³So Mary and Martha sent someone to tell Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick."

⁴When Jesus heard this he said, "This sickness will not end in death. It is for the glory of God. This has happened to bring glory to the Son of God." ⁵Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶But when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was for two more days. ⁷Then Jesus said to his followers, "Let us go back to Judea."

⁸The followers said, "But Teacher, the Jews there tried to kill you with stones. That was only a short time ago. Now you want to go back there?"

⁹Jesus answered, "Are there not 12 hours in the day? If anyone walks in the daylight, he will not stumble because he can see by this world's light. ¹⁰But if anyone walks at night he stumbles because there is no light to help him see."

¹¹After Jesus said this, he added, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep. But I am going there to wake him."

¹²The followers said, "But Lord, if he can sleep, he will get well."

¹³Jesus meant that Lazarus was dead. But Jesus' followers thought that he meant Lazarus was really sleeping. ¹⁴So then Jesus said plainly, "Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."

¹⁶Then Thomas (the one called Didymus) said to the other followers, "Let us go, too. We will die with him."

Jesus in Bethany

¹⁷Jesus arrived in Bethany. There he learned that Lazarus had already been dead and in the tomb for four days. ¹⁸Bethany was about two miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁹Many Jews had come there to comfort Martha and Mary about their brother.

²⁰Martha heard that Jesus was coming, and she went out to meet him. But Mary stayed at home. ²¹Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But I know that even now God will give you anything you ask."

²³Jesus said, "Your brother will rise again."

²⁴Martha answered, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day."

²⁵Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will have life even if he dies. ²⁶And he who lives and believes in me will never die. Martha, do you believe this?"

²⁷Martha answered, "Yes, Lord. I believe that you are the Christ,^a the Son of God. You are the One who was coming to the world."

Jesus Cries

²⁸After Martha said this, she went back to her sister Mary. She talked to Mary alone. Martha said, "The Teacher is here and he is asking for you." ²⁹When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to Jesus. ³⁰Jesus had not yet come into the town. He was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹The Jews were with Mary in the house, comforting her. They saw Mary stand and leave quickly. They followed her, thinking that she was going to the tomb to cry there. ³²But Mary went to the place where Jesus was. When she saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

³³Jesus saw that Mary was crying and that the Jews who came with her were crying, too. Jesus felt very sad in his heart and was deeply troubled. ³⁴He asked, "Where did you bury him?"

"Come and see, Lord," they said.

³⁵Jesus cried.

^{27a} Or *Messiah*.

³⁶So the Jews said, "See how much he loved him."

³⁷But some of them said, "If Jesus healed the eyes of the blind man, why didn't he keep Lazarus from dying?"

Jesus Raises Lazarus

³⁸Again Jesus felt very sad in his heart. He came to the tomb. The tomb was a cave with a large stone covering the entrance.

³⁹Jesus said, "Move the stone away."

Martha said, "But, Lord, it has been four days since he died. There will be a bad smell." Martha was the sister of the dead man.

⁴⁰Then Jesus said to her, "Didn't I tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?"

⁴¹So they moved the stone away from the entrance. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you heard me. ⁴²I know that you always hear me. But I said this because of the people here around me. I want them to believe that you sent me." ⁴³After Jesus said this, he cried out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" ⁴⁴The dead man came out. His hands and feet were wrapped with pieces of cloth, and he had a cloth around his face.

Jesus said to them, "Take the cloth off of him and let him go."

The Jewish Leaders Plan to Kill Jesus

⁴⁵There were many Jews who had come to visit Mary. They saw what Jesus did. And many of them believed in him. ⁴⁶But some of the Jews went to the Pharisees. They told the Pharisees what Jesus had done. ⁴⁷Then the leading priests and Pharisees called a meeting of the Jewish council. They asked, "What should we do? This man is doing many miracles. ⁴⁸If we let him continue doing these things, everyone will believe in him. Then the Romans will come and take away our temple and our nation."

⁴⁹One of the men there was Caiaphas. He was the high priest that year. Caiaphas said, "You people know nothing! ⁵⁰It is better for one man to die for the people than for the whole nation to be destroyed. But you don't realize this."

⁵¹Caiaphas did not think of this himself. He was high priest that year. So he was really prophesying that Jesus would die for

the Jewish nation ⁵²and for God's scattered children. This would bring them all together and make them one.

⁵³That day the Jewish leaders started planning to kill Jesus.

⁵⁴So Jesus no longer traveled openly among the Jews. He left there and went to a place near the desert. He went to a town called Ephraim and stayed there with his followers.

⁵⁵It was almost time for the Jewish Passover Feast. Many from the country went up to Jerusalem before the Passover. They went to do the special things to make themselves pure.

⁵⁶The people looked for Jesus. They stood in the temple and were asking each other, "Is he coming to the Feast? What do you think?" ⁵⁷But the leading priests and the Pharisees had given orders about Jesus. They said that if anyone knew where Jesus was, he must tell them. Then they could arrest Jesus.

Jesus in Bethany with His Friends

12 Six days before the Passover Feast, Jesus went to Bethany, where Lazarus lived. (Lazarus is the man Jesus raised from death.) ²There they had a dinner for Jesus. Martha served the food. Lazarus was one of the people eating with Jesus. ³Mary brought in a pint of very expensive perfume made from pure nard. She poured the perfume on Jesus' feet, and then she wiped his feet with her hair. And the sweet smell from the perfume filled the whole house.

⁴Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus' followers, was there. (He was the one who would later turn against Jesus.) Judas said, ⁵"This perfume was worth 300 silver coins. It should have been sold, and the money given to the poor." ⁶But Judas did not really care about the poor. He said this because he was a thief. He was the one who kept the money box, and he often stole money from it.

⁷Jesus answered, "Let her alone. It was right for her to save this perfume for today—the day for me to be prepared for burial. ⁸The poor will always be with you, but you will not always have me."

The Plot Against Lazarus

⁹A large crowd of Jews heard that Jesus was in Bethany. So they went there to see not only Jesus but also Lazarus. Lazarus was the one Jesus raised from death. ¹⁰So the leading priests

made plans to kill Lazarus, too. ¹¹Because of Lazarus many Jews were leaving them and believing in Jesus.

Jesus Enters Jerusalem

¹²The next day a great crowd in Jerusalem heard that Jesus was coming there. These were the people who had come to the Passover Feast. ¹³They took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Jesus. They shouted,

“Praise^a God!

God bless the One who comes

in the name of the Lord!

God bless the King of Israel!”

Psal'm 118:25-26

¹⁴Jesus found a colt and sat on it. This was as the Scripture says,

¹⁵“Do not be afraid, city of Zion^b!

Look! Your king is coming.

He is riding on a donkey's colt.”

Zechariah 9:9

¹⁶The followers of Jesus did not understand this at first. But after Jesus was raised to glory, they remembered that this had been written about him. And they remembered that they had done these things to him.

People Tell About Jesus

¹⁷There had been many people with Jesus when he raised Lazarus from death and told him to come out of the tomb. Now they were telling others about what Jesus did. ¹⁸Many people went out to meet Jesus, because they had heard about this miracle. ¹⁹So the Pharisees said to each other, “You can see that nothing is going right for us. Look! The whole world is following him.”

Jesus Talks About His Death

²⁰There were some Greek people, too, who came to Jerusalem to worship at the Passover Feast. ²¹They went to Philip. (Philip was from Bethsaida, in Galilee.) They said, “Sir, we would like to see Jesus.” ²²Philip told Andrew. Then Andrew and Philip told Jesus.

²³Jesus said to them, “The time has come for the Son of Man

^{13a} Or *Hosanna*. ^{15b} Or *daughter of Zion*.

to receive his glory. ²⁴I tell you the truth. A grain of wheat must fall to the ground and die. Then it makes many seeds. But if it never dies, it remains only a single seed. ²⁵The person who loves his own life will lose it. But the person who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶Whoever serves me must follow me. Then my servant will be with me everywhere I am. My Father will honor anyone who serves me."

²⁷"Now I am very troubled. What should I say? Should I say, 'Father, save me from this time'? No, I came to this time so that I could suffer. ²⁸Father, bring glory to your name!"

Then a voice came from heaven, "I have brought glory to it, and I will do it again."

²⁹The crowd standing there heard the voice. They said it was thunder.

But others said, "An angel has spoken to him."

³⁰Jesus said, "That voice was for you, not for me. ³¹Now is the time for the world to be judged. Now the ruler of this world [the devil] will be thrown down. ³²I will be lifted up from the earth. And when this happens, I will draw all people toward me." ³³Jesus said this to show how he would die.

³⁴The crowd said, "We have heard from the law that the Christ^a will live forever. So why do you say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this 'Son of Man'?"

³⁵Then Jesus said, "The light will be with you for a little longer. So walk while you have the light. Then the darkness will not catch you. He who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. ³⁶So believe in the light while you still have it. Then you will become sons of light." When Jesus had said this, he left and hid himself from them.

The Jews Refuse to Believe in Jesus

³⁷Though Jesus had done many miracles before the people, they still did not believe in him. ³⁸This was to make clear the full meaning of what Isaiah the prophet said:

"Lord, who believed the things we told them?

Who has seen the Lord's power?"

Isaiah 53:1

³⁹This is why the people could not believe. Because Isaiah also said,

³⁴^a Or *Messiah*.

⁴⁰“He has blinded their eyes.
He has closed their minds,
so that they will not
see with their eyes,
understand with their minds,
and turn to me to heal them.”

Isaiah 6:10

⁴¹Isaiah said this because he saw his [Jesus'] glory and spoke about him.

⁴²But many people believed in Jesus, even many of the Jewish leaders. But because of the Pharisees, they did not say that they believed in him. They were afraid that they would be put out of the synagogue. ⁴³They loved praise from men more than praise from God.

People Will Be Judged by the Things Jesus Taught

⁴⁴Then Jesus cried out, “He who believes in me is really believing in the One who sent me. ⁴⁵He who sees me sees the One who sent me. ⁴⁶I have come as light into the world. I came so that whoever believes in me would not stay in darkness.

⁴⁷“If anyone hears my words and does not obey them, I do not judge him. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. ⁴⁸There is a judge for the one who refuses to believe in me and does not accept my words. The word I have taught will be his judge on the last day. ⁴⁹The things I taught were not from myself. The Father who sent me told me what to say and what to teach. ⁵⁰And I know that eternal life comes from what the Father commands. So whatever I say is what the Father told me to say.”

Jesus Washes His Followers' Feet

13 It was almost time for the Jewish Passover Feast. Jesus knew that it was the time for him to leave this world and go back to the Father. He had always loved those who were his own in the world, and he loved them all the way to the end.

²Jesus and his followers were at the evening meal. The devil had already persuaded Judas Iscariot to turn against Jesus. (Judas was the son of Simon.) ³Jesus knew that the Father had given him power over everything. He also knew that he had come from God and was going back to God. ⁴So during the

meal Jesus stood up and took off his outer clothing. Taking a towel, he wrapped it around his waist. ⁵Then he poured water into a bowl and began to wash the followers' feet. He dried them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

⁶Jesus came to Simon Peter. But Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

⁷Jesus answered, "You don't understand what I am doing now. But you will understand later."

⁸Peter said, "No! You will never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "If I don't wash your feet, then you are not one of my people."

⁹Simon Peter answered, "Lord, after you wash my feet, wash my hands and my head, too!"

¹⁰Jesus said, "After a person has had a bath, his whole body is clean. He needs only to wash his feet. And you men are clean, but not all of you." ¹¹Jesus knew who would turn against him. That is why Jesus said, "Not all of you are clean."

¹²When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and sat down again. Jesus asked, "Do you understand what I have just done for you?" ¹³You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord.' And this is right, because that is what I am. ¹⁴I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet. So you also should wash each other's feet. ¹⁵I did this as an example for you. So you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶I tell you the truth. A servant is not greater than his master. A messenger is not greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷If you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

¹⁸"I am not talking about all of you. I know those I have chosen. But what the Scripture said must happen: 'The man who shared my food has turned against me.'^a ¹⁹I am telling you this now before it happens. Then when it happens you will believe that I am he. ²⁰I tell you the truth. Whoever accepts anyone I send also accepts me. And whoever accepts me also accepts the One who sent me."

Jesus Tells Who Will Give Him to be Killed

²¹After Jesus said this, he was very troubled. He said openly, "I tell you the truth. One of you will turn against me."

^{18a} Or *The man . . . has lifted up his heel against me* (Psalm 41:9).

²²The followers all looked at each other. They did not know whom Jesus was talking about. ²³One of the followers was sitting^a next to Jesus. This was the follower Jesus loved. ²⁴Simon Peter made signs to him to ask Jesus who it was that he was talking about.

²⁵That follower leaned closer to Jesus and asked, "Lord, who is it that will turn against you?"

²⁶Jesus answered, "I will dip this bread into the dish. The man I give it to is the man who will turn against me." So Jesus took a piece of bread. He dipped it and gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. ²⁷As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered him. Jesus said to Judas, "The thing that you will do—do it quickly!" ²⁸None of the men at the table understood why Jesus said this to Judas. ²⁹He was the one who kept the money box. So some of the followers thought that Jesus was telling Judas to buy what was needed for the feast. Or they thought that Jesus wanted Judas to give something to the poor.

³⁰Judas accepted the bread Jesus gave him and immediately went out. It was night.

Jesus Talks About His Death

³¹When Judas was gone, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man receives his glory. And God receives glory through him. ³²If God receives glory through him,^b then God will give glory to the Son through himself. And God will give him glory quickly."

³³Jesus said, "My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me. And what I told the Jews, I tell you now: Where I am going you cannot come.

³⁴"I give you a new commandment: Love each other. You must love each other as I loved you. ³⁵All people will know that you are my followers if you love each other."

Jesus Says that Peter Will Deny Him

³⁶Simon Peter asked Jesus, "Lord, where are you going?"

Jesus answered, "Where I am going you cannot follow now. But you will follow later."

³⁷Peter asked, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I am ready to die for you!"

^{23a} Or *lying*. ^{32b} Many early Greek copies omit *If God receives glory through him*.

³⁸Jesus answered, "Will you really die for me? I tell you the truth. Before the rooster crows, you will say three times that you don't know me."

Jesus Comforts His Followers

14 Jesus said, "Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God. And trust in me. ²There are many rooms in my Father's house. I would not tell you this if it were not true. I am going there to prepare a place for you. ³After I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back. Then I will take you to be with me, so that you may be where I am. ⁴You know the way to the place where I am going."

⁵Thomas said to Jesus, "Lord, we don't know where you are going. So how can we know the way?"

⁶Jesus answered, "I am the way. And I am the truth and the life. The only way to the Father is through me. ⁷If you really knew me, then you would know my Father, too. But now you do know him, and you have seen him."

⁸Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father. That is all we need."

⁹Jesus answered, "I have been with you a long time now. Do you still not know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father. So why do you say, 'Show us the Father'? ¹⁰Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I say to you don't come from me. The Father lives in me, and he is doing his own work. ¹¹Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or believe because of the miracles I have done. ¹²I tell you the truth. He who believes in me will do the works that I do. He will do even greater works than these because I am going to the Father. ¹³And if you ask for anything in my name, I will do it for you. Then the Father's glory will be shown through the Son. ¹⁴If you ask me for anything in my name, I will do it."

The Promise of the Holy Spirit

¹⁵"If you love me, you will do the things I command. ¹⁶I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper. He will give you this Helper to be with you forever. ¹⁷The Helper is the

Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him because it does not see him or know him. But you know him. He lives with you and he will be^a in you.

¹⁸“I will not leave you all alone like children without parents. I will come back to you. ¹⁹In a little while the world will not see me any more, but you will see me. Because I live, you will live, too. ²⁰On that day you will know that I am in my Father. You will know that you are in me and I am in you. ²¹He who knows my commandments and obeys them is the one who loves me. And my Father will love him who loves me. I will love him and will show myself to him.”

²²Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, “But, Lord, why do you plan to show yourself to us, but not to the world?”

²³Jesus answered, “If anyone loves me, then he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. ²⁴He who does not love me does not obey my teaching. This teaching that you hear is not really mine. It is from my Father, who sent me.

²⁵“I have told you all these things while I am with you. ²⁶But the Helper will teach you everything. He will cause you to remember all that I told you. This Helper is the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name.

²⁷“I leave you peace. My peace I give you. I do not give it to you as the world does. So don’t let your hearts be troubled. Don’t be afraid. ²⁸You heard me say to you, ‘I am going, but I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you should be happy that I am going back to the Father because he is greater than I am. ²⁹I have told you this now, before it happens. Then when it happens, you will believe. ³⁰I will not talk with you much longer. The ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me. ³¹But the world must know that I love the Father. So I do exactly what the Father told me to do.

“Come now, let us go.”

Jesus Is Like a Vine

15 “I am the true vine; my Father is the gardener. ²He cuts off every branch of mine that does not produce fruit. And

^{17a} Some Greek copies say *is*.

he trims and cleans every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce even more fruit. ³You are already clean because of the words I have spoken to you. ⁴Remain in me and I will remain in you. No branch can produce fruit alone. It must remain in the vine. It is the same with you. You cannot produce fruit alone. You must remain in me.

⁵"I am the vine and you are the branches. If a person remains in me and I remain in him, then he produces much fruit. But without me he can do nothing. ⁶If anyone does not remain in me, then he is like a branch that is thrown away. That branch dies. People pick up dead branches, throw them into the fire, and burn them. ⁷Remain in me and follow my teachings. If you do this, then you can ask for anything you want, and it will be given you. ⁸You should produce much fruit and show that you are my followers. This brings glory to my Father. ⁹I loved you as the Father loved me. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰I have obeyed my Father's commands, and I remain in his love. In the same way, if you obey my commands, you will remain in my love. ¹¹I have told you these things so that you can have the same joy I have. I want your joy to be the fullest joy.

¹²This is my commandment: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³The greatest love a person can show is to die for his friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵I don't call you servants now. A servant does not know what his master is doing. But now I call you friends because I have made known to you everything I heard from my Father. ¹⁶You did not choose me; I chose you. And I gave you this work, to go and produce fruit. I want you to produce fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you anything you ask for in my name. ¹⁷This is my command: Love each other."

Jesus Warns His Followers About the World

¹⁸"If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first. ¹⁹If you belonged to the world, then it would love you as it loves its own. But I have chosen you out of the world. So you don't belong to it. That is why the world hates you. ²⁰Remember what I told you: A servant is not greater than his master. If people persecuted me, they will persecute you, too. And if they obeyed my

teaching, they will obey yours, too. ²¹They will do all this to you because of me. They don't know the One who sent me. ²²If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³He who hates me also hates my Father. ²⁴I did works among them that no one else has ever done. If I had not done those works, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have seen what I did, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. ²⁵But this happened so that what is written in their law would be true: 'They hated me for no reason.'

²⁶"I will send you the Helper from the Father. He is the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father. When he comes, he will tell about me. ²⁷And you also must tell people about me because you have been with me from the beginning."

16 "I have told you these things to keep you from giving up. ²People will put you out of their synagogues. Yes, the time is coming when whoever kills you will think that he is offering service to God. ³They will do this because they have not known the Father and they have not known me. ⁴I have told you these things now. So when the time comes, you will remember that I warned you."

The Work of the Holy Spirit

"I did not tell you these things at the beginning, because I was with you then. ⁵Now I am going back to the One who sent me. But none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' ⁶Your hearts are filled with sadness because I have told you these things. ⁷But I tell you the truth. It is better for you that I go away. When I go away I will send the Helper to you. If I do not go away, then the Helper will not come. ⁸When the Helper comes, he will prove to the people of the world the truth about sin, about being right with God, and about judgment. ⁹He will prove to them about sin, because they don't believe in me. ¹⁰He will prove to them that I am right with God, because I am going to the Father. You will not see me any more. ¹¹And the Helper will prove to them the truth about judgment, because the ruler of this world is already judged.

²⁵ ^a These words could be from Psalm 35:19 or Psalm 69:4.

¹²“I have many more things to say to you, but they are too much for you now. ¹³But when the Spirit of truth comes he will lead you into all truth. He will not speak his own words. He will speak only what he hears and will tell you what is to come. ¹⁴The Spirit of truth will bring glory to me. He will take what I have to say and tell it to you. ¹⁵All that the Father has is mine. That is why I said that the Spirit will take what I have to say and tell it to you.”

Sadness Will Change to Happiness

¹⁶“After a little while you will not see me. Then after a little while you will see me again.”

¹⁷Some of the followers said to each other, “What does Jesus mean when he says, ‘After a little while you will not see me, and then after a little while you will see me again’? And what does he mean when he says, ‘Because I am going to the Father’?” ¹⁸They also asked, “What does he mean by ‘a little while’? We don’t understand what he is saying.”

¹⁹Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this. So he said to them, “Are you asking each other what I meant when I said, ‘After a little while you will not see me. And then after a little while you will see me again’? ²⁰I tell you the truth. You will cry and weep, but the world will be happy. You will be sad, but your sadness will become joy. ²¹When a woman gives birth to a baby, she has pain, because her time has come. But when her baby is born, she forgets the pain. She forgets because she is so happy that a child has been born into the world. ²²It is the same with you. Now you are sad. But I will see you again and you will be happy. And no one will take away your joy. ²³In that day you will not ask me anything. I tell you the truth. My Father will give you anything you ask for in my name. ²⁴You have never asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive. And your joy will be the fullest joy.”

Victory over the World

²⁵“I have told you these things, using words that hide the meaning. But the time will come when I will not use words like that to tell you things. I will speak to you in plain words about the Father. ²⁶In that day you will ask the Father for things in my

name. I am saying that I will not need to ask the Father for you. ²⁷No! The Father himself loves you. He loves you because you have loved me. And he loves you because you have believed that I came from God. ²⁸I came from the Father into the world. Now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father."

²⁹Then his followers said, "Now you are speaking clearly to us and not in words that are hard to understand. ³⁰Now we can see now that you know all things. You do not need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God."

³¹Jesus answered, "So now you believe? ³²Listen to me. The time is coming when you will be scattered, each to his own home. That time is now here. You will be leaving me alone. But I am never really alone because the Father is with me.

³³"I have told you these things so that you can find peace in me. In this world you will have trouble. But be brave! I have defeated the world!"

Jesus Prays for His Followers

17 After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven. He prayed, "Father, the time has come. Give glory to your Son so that the Son can give glory to you. ²You gave him power over all people so that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. ³And this is eternal life: that they can know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the One you sent. ⁴I finished the work you gave me to do. I brought you glory on earth. ⁵And now, Father, give me glory with you. Give me the glory I had with you before the world was made.

⁶"You gave me some men from the world. I have made you known to them. They belonged to you, and you gave them to me. They have obeyed your teaching. ⁷Now they know that everything you gave me comes from you. ⁸I gave them the teachings that you gave me, and they accepted them. They know that I truly came from you, and they believed that you sent me. ⁹I pray for them now. I am not praying for the world. I am praying for those men you gave me, because they are yours. ¹⁰All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And my glory is shown through these men. ¹¹Now I am coming to you. I will no longer be in the world, but these men are still in the world. Holy Fa-

ther, keep them safe. Keep them safe by the power of your name (the name you gave me), so that they will be one, just as you and I are one. ¹²While I was with them, I kept them safe by the power of your name—the name you gave me. I protected them. And only one of them, the child of hell [Judas], was lost. He was lost so that what was said in the Scripture might have its full meaning.

¹³“I am coming to you now. But I say these things while I am still in the world so that they may have within them all of my joy. ¹⁴I have given them your teaching, and the world has hated them. The world hated them, because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. ¹⁵I am not asking you to take them out of the world but to keep them safe from the Evil One. ¹⁶They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. ¹⁷Make them ready for your service through your truth. Your teaching is truth. ¹⁸I have sent them into the world, just as you sent me into the world. ¹⁹I am making myself ready to serve. I do this for them, so that they can truly be ready for your service.

²⁰“I pray for these men. But I am also praying for all who will believe in me because of their teaching. ²¹Father, I pray that all who believe in me may be one. You are in me and I am in you. I pray that those who believe may also be one in us, so that the world will believe that you sent me. ²²I have given them the glory that you gave me. I gave them this glory so that they may be one, just as you and I are one. ²³I will be in them, and you will be in me. So they will be completely one, and the world will know that you sent me. The world will know that you loved them just as you loved me.

²⁴“Father, I want those that you have given me to be with me where I am. I want them to see my glory. This is the glory you gave me because you loved me before the world was made.

²⁵Father, you are the One who is good. The world does not know you, but I know you. And those who believe know that you sent me. ²⁶I showed them what you are like, and I will continue to show them. Then they will have the same love that you have for me, and I will live in them.”

Jesus Is Arrested

18 When Jesus finished praying, he went with his followers across the Kidron Valley. On the other side was a garden, and Jesus and his followers went there.

²Judas knew where this place was, because Jesus met there often with his followers. Judas was the one who turned against Jesus. ³So Judas led a group of soldiers to the garden. He also brought some guards from the leading priests and the Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns, and weapons.

⁴Jesus knew everything that would happen to him. Jesus went out and asked, "Whom are you looking for?"

⁵The men answered, "Jesus of Nazareth."

Jesus said, "I am he." (Judas, the one who turned against Jesus, was standing there with them.) ⁶When Jesus said, "I am he," the men moved back and fell to the ground.

⁷Jesus asked them again, "Whom are you looking for?"

They said, "Jesus of Nazareth."

⁸Jesus said, "I told you that I am he. If you are looking for me, then let these other men go." ⁹This happened so that the words Jesus said before might come true: "I have not lost any of the men you gave me."

¹⁰Simon Peter had a sword. He took it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) ¹¹Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back. Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?"

Jesus Is Brought Before Annas

¹²Then the soldiers with their commander and the Jewish guards arrested Jesus. They tied him ¹³and led him first to Annas. Annas was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. ¹⁴Caiaphas was the one who had told the Jews that it would be better for one man to die for all the people.

Peter Says He Does Not Know Jesus

¹⁵Simon Peter and another one of Jesus' followers went along after Jesus. This follower knew the high priest. So he went with Jesus into the high priest's courtyard. ¹⁶But Peter waited outside near the door. The follower who knew the high priest came back outside. He spoke to the girl at the door and brought Peter

inside. ¹⁷The girl at the door said to Peter, "Aren't you also one of that man's followers?"

Peter answered, "No, I am not!"

¹⁸It was cold, so the servants and guards had built a fire. They were standing around it and warming themselves. Peter was standing with them, warming himself.

The High Priest Questions Jesus

¹⁹The high priest asked Jesus questions about his followers and his teaching. ²⁰Jesus answered, "I have spoken openly to everyone. I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I never said anything in secret. ²¹So why do you question me? Ask the people who heard my teaching. They know what I said."

²²When Jesus said this, one of the guards standing there hit him. The guard said, "Is that the way you answer the high priest?"

²³Jesus answered him, "If I said something wrong, then say what was wrong. But if what I said is true, why do you hit me?"

²⁴Annas sent Jesus to Caiaphas, the high priest. Jesus was still tied.

Peter Says Again That He Does Not Know Jesus

²⁵Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They said to him, "Aren't you one of that man's followers?"

Peter denied it and said, "No, I am not."

²⁶One of the servants of the high priest was there. This servant was a relative to the man whose ear Peter had cut off. The servant said, "Didn't I see you with him in the garden?"

²⁷Again Peter denied it. Just then a rooster crowed.

Jesus Is Brought Before Pilate

²⁸Then the Jews led Jesus from Caiaphas' house to the Roman governor's palace. It was early in the morning. The Jews would not go inside the palace. They did not want to make themselves unclean, because they wanted to eat the Passover meal. ²⁹So Pilate went outside to them. He asked, "What charges do you bring against this man?"

³⁰They answered, "He is a criminal. That is why we brought him to you."

³¹Pilate said to the Jews, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law."

They answered, "But we are not allowed to put anyone to death." ³²(This happened so that what Jesus had said about how he would die would come true.)

³³Then Pilate went back inside the palace. He called Jesus to him and asked, "Are you the King of the Jews?"

³⁴Jesus said, "Is that your own question, or did others tell you about me?"

³⁵Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew. It was your own people and their leading priests who brought you before me. What have you done wrong?"

³⁶Jesus said, "My kingdom does not belong to this world. If it belonged to this world, my servants would fight so that I would not be given over to the Jews. But my kingdom is from another place."

³⁷Pilate said, "So you are a king!"

Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. That is true. I was born for this: to tell people about the truth. That is why I came into the world. And everyone who belongs to the truth listens to me."

³⁸Pilate said, "What is truth?" After he said this, he went out to the Jews again. He said to them, "I can find nothing to charge against this man. ³⁹But it is your custom that I free one prisoner to you at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to free this 'King of the Jews'?"

⁴⁰They shouted back, "No, not him! Let Barabbas go free!" (Barabbas was a robber.)

19 Then Pilate ordered that Jesus be taken away and whipped. ²The soldiers used some thorny branches to make a crown. They put this crown on Jesus' head and put a purple robe around him. ³Then they came to Jesus many times and said, "Hail, O King of the Jews!" They hit Jesus in the face.

⁴Again Pilate came out and said to the Jews, "Look! I am bringing Jesus out to you. I want you to know that I find nothing I can charge against him." ⁵Then Jesus came out, wear-

ing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to the Jews, "Here is the man!"

⁶When the leading priests and the Jewish guards saw Jesus they shouted, "Kill him on a cross! Kill him on a cross!"

But Pilate answered, "Take him and nail him to a cross yourselves. I find nothing I can charge against him."

⁷The Jews answered, "We have a law that says he should die, because he said he is the Son of God."

⁸When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid. ⁹He went back inside the palace and asked Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus did not answer him. ¹⁰Pilate said, "You refuse to speak to me? Don't you know that I have power to set you free and power to have you killed on a cross?"

¹¹Jesus answered, "The only power you have over me is the power given to you by God. The man who gave me to you is guilty of a greater sin."

¹²After this, Pilate tried to let Jesus go free. But the Jews cried out, "Anyone who makes himself king is against Caesar. If you let this man go free, you are not Caesar's friend."

¹³Pilate heard what the Jews were saying. So he brought Jesus out to the place called "The Stone Pavement." (In the Jewish language the name is "Gabbatha.") Pilate sat down on the judge's seat there. ¹⁴It was now almost noon on Preparation Day of Passover week. Pilate said to the Jews, "Here is your king!"

¹⁵The Jews shouted, "Take him away! Take him away! Kill him on a cross!"

Pilate asked them, "Do you want me to kill your king on a cross?"

The leading priests answered, "The only king we have is Caesar!"

¹⁶So Pilate gave Jesus to them to be killed on a cross.

Jesus Is Killed on a Cross

The soldiers took charge of Jesus. ¹⁷Carrying his own cross, Jesus went out to a place called "The Place of the Skull." (In the Jewish language this place is called "Golgotha.") ¹⁸There they nailed Jesus to the cross. They also put two other men on

crosses, one on each side of Jesus with Jesus in the middle. ¹⁹Pilate wrote a sign and put it on the cross. It read, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. ²⁰The sign was written in the Jewish language, in Latin, and in Greek. Many of the Jews read the sign, because this place where they killed Jesus was near the city. ²¹The leading Jewish priests said to Pilate, "Don't write, 'The King of the Jews.' But write, 'This man said, "I am the King of the Jews.'""

²²Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written!"

²³After the soldiers nailed Jesus to the cross, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts. Each soldier got one part. They also took his tunic. It was all one piece of cloth, woven from top to bottom. ²⁴So the soldiers said to each other, "We should not tear this into parts. We should throw dice to see who will get it." This happened to give full meaning to the Scripture:

"They divided my clothes among them,
and they threw dice for my clothing."

Psalms 22:18

So the soldiers did this.

²⁵Jesus' mother stood near his cross. His mother's sister was also standing there, with Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶Jesus saw his mother and the follower he loved standing there. He said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son." ²⁷Then he said to the follower, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this follower took her to live in his home.

Jesus Dies

²⁸After this, Jesus knew that everything had been done. To make the Scripture come true, he said, "I am thirsty."^a ²⁹There was a jar full of vinegar there, so the soldiers soaked a sponge in it. Then they put the sponge on a branch of a hyssop plant and lifted it to Jesus' mouth. ³⁰When Jesus tasted the vinegar, he said, "It is finished." He bowed his head and died.

³¹This day was Preparation Day. The next day was a special Sabbath day. The Jews did not want the bodies to stay on the cross on the Sabbath day. So they asked Pilate to order that the legs of the men be broken and the bodies be taken away. ³²So

^{28a} *Psalms 22:15, 69:21.*

the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man on the cross beside Jesus. Then they broke the legs of the man on the other cross beside Jesus. ³³But when the soldiers came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead. So they did not break his legs. ³⁴But one of the soldiers stuck his spear into Jesus' side, and at once blood and water came out. ³⁵(The one who saw this happen has told about it, and what he says is true. He knows that he tells the truth. He told about it so that you also can believe.) ³⁶These things happened to make the Scripture come true: "None of his bones will be broken."^a ³⁷And another Scripture said, "They will look at the one they pierced."^b

Jesus Is Buried

³⁸Later, a man named Joseph from Arimathea asked Pilate if he could take the body of Jesus. (Joseph was a secret follower of Jesus, because he was afraid of the Jews.) Pilate gave his permission; so Joseph came and took Jesus' body away. ³⁹Nicodemus went with Joseph. Nicodemus was the man who earlier had come to Jesus at night. He brought about 100 pounds of spices, a mixture of myrrh and aloes. ⁴⁰These two men took Jesus' body and wrapped it with the spices in pieces of linen cloth. (This is how the Jews bury people.) ⁴¹In the place where Jesus was killed, there was a garden. In the garden was a new tomb where no one had ever been buried. ⁴²The men laid Jesus in that tomb because it was near and the Jews were preparing to start their Sabbath day.

Some Followers Find Jesus' Tomb Empty

20 Early on the first day of the week while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb. She saw that the large stone had been moved away from the tomb. ²So Mary ran to Simon Peter and the other follower (the one Jesus loved). She said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they put him."

³So Peter and the other follower started for the tomb. ⁴They were both running, but the other follower ran faster than Peter. So the other follower reached the tomb first. ⁵He bent down and looked in. He saw the strips of linen cloth lying there, but

^{36a} Psalm 34: 20. The idea is from Exodus 12: 46, Numbers 9: 12. ^{37b} Zechariah 12: 10.

he did not go in. ⁶Then following him came Simon Peter. He went into the tomb and saw the strips of linen lying there. ⁷He also saw the cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up and laid in a different place from the strips of linen. ⁸Then the other follower, who had reached the tomb first, also went in. He saw and believed. ⁹(These followers did not yet understand from the Scriptures that Jesus must rise from death.)

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

¹⁰Then the followers went back home. ¹¹But Mary stood outside the tomb, crying. While she was still crying, she bent down and looked inside the tomb. ¹²She saw two angels dressed in white. They were sitting where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and one at the feet.

¹³They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"

She answered, "They have taken away my Lord. I don't know where they have put him." ¹⁴When Mary said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there. But she did not know that it was Jesus.

¹⁵Jesus asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Whom are you looking for?"

Mary thought he was the gardener. So she said to him, "Did you take him away, sir? Tell me where you put him, and I will get him."

¹⁶Jesus said to her, "Mary."

Mary turned toward Jesus and said in the Jewish language, "Rabboni." (This means "Teacher.")

¹⁷Jesus said to her, "Don't hold me. I have not yet gone up to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them this: 'I am going back to my Father and your Father. I am going back to my God and your God.'" ¹⁸Mary Magdalene went and said to the followers, "I saw the Lord!" And she told them what Jesus had said to her.

Jesus Appears to His Followers

¹⁹It was the first day of the week. That evening the followers were together. The doors were locked, because they were afraid of the Jews. Then Jesus came and stood among them. He said,

"Peace be with you!" ²⁰After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The followers were very happy when they saw the Lord.

²¹Then Jesus said again, "Peace be with you! As the Father sent me, I now send you." ²²After he said this, he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven. If you don't forgive them, they are not forgiven."

Jesus Appears to Thomas

²⁴Thomas (called Didymus) was not with the followers when Jesus came. Thomas was one of the 12. ²⁵The other followers told Thomas, "We saw the Lord." Thomas said, "I will not believe it until I see the nail marks in his hands. And I will not believe until I put my finger where the nails were and put my hand into his side."

²⁶A week later the followers were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. The doors were locked, but Jesus came in and stood among them. He said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here. Look at my hands. Put your hand here in my side. Stop doubting and believe."

²⁸Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

²⁹Then Jesus told him, "You believe because you see me. Those who believe without seeing me will be blessed."

Why John Wrote This Book

³⁰Jesus did many other miracles before his followers that are not written in this book. ³¹But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ,^a the Son of God. Then, by believing, you may have life through his name.

Jesus Appears to Seven Followers

21 Later, Jesus showed himself to his followers by the Sea of Tiberias.^b This is how it happened: ²Some of the followers were together. They were Simon Peter, Thomas (called Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the two sons of Zebedee, and two other followers. ³Simon Peter said, "I am going out to fish."

^{31a} Or *Messiah*. ^{1b} Or *Sea of Galilee*.

The other followers said, "We will go with you." So they went out and got into the boat. They fished that night but caught nothing.

⁴Early the next morning Jesus stood on the shore. But the followers did not know that it was Jesus. ⁵Then he said to them, "Friends, have you caught any fish?"

They answered, "No."

⁶He said, "Throw your net into the water on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they did this. They caught so many fish that they could not pull the net back into the boat.

⁷The follower whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Peter heard him say this, he wrapped his coat around himself. (Peter had taken his clothes off.) Then he jumped into the water. ⁸The other followers went to shore in the boat, dragging the net full of fish. They were not very far from shore, only about 100 yards. ⁹When the followers stepped out of the boat and onto the shore, they saw a fire of hot coals. There were fish on the fire and some bread there, too. ¹⁰Then Jesus said, "Bring some of the fish that you caught."

¹¹Simon Peter went into the boat and pulled the net to the shore. It was full of big fish. There were 153. Even though there were so many, the net did not tear. ¹²Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the followers dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. ¹³Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them. He also gave them the fish.

¹⁴This was now the third time Jesus showed himself to his followers after he was raised from death.

Jesus Talks to Peter

¹⁵When they finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?"

He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

¹⁶Again Jesus said, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?"

He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."

¹⁷A third time he said, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?"

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do

you love me?" Peter said, "Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you!"

He said to him, "Feed my sheep. ¹⁸I tell you the truth. When you were younger, you tied your own belt and went where you wanted. But when you are old, you will put out your hands and someone else will tie them. They will take you where you don't want to go." ¹⁹(Jesus said this to show how Peter would die to give glory to God.) Then Jesus said to Peter, "Follow me!"

²⁰Peter turned and saw that the follower Jesus loved was walking behind them. (This was the follower who had leaned against Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who will turn against you?") ²¹When Peter saw him behind them he asked Jesus, "Lord, what about him?"

²²Jesus answered, "Perhaps I want him to live until I come back. That should not be important to you. You follow me!"

²³So a story spread among the brothers that this follower would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die. He only said, "Perhaps I want him to live until I come back. That should not be important to you."

²⁴That follower is the one who is telling these things. He is the one who has now written them down. We know that what he says is true.

²⁵There are many other things that Jesus did. If every one of them were written down, I think the whole world would not be big enough for all the books that would be written.

Acts

Luke Writes Another Book

1 To Theophilus,
The first book I wrote was about everything that Jesus did and taught. ²I wrote about the whole life of Jesus, from the beginning until the day he was taken up into heaven. Before this, Jesus talked to the apostles he had chosen. With the help of the Holy Spirit, Jesus told them what they should do. ³After his death, he showed himself to them and proved in many ways that he was alive. The apostles saw Jesus during the 40 days after he was raised from death. He spoke to them about the kingdom of God. ⁴Once when he was eating with them, he told them not to leave Jerusalem. He said, “The Father has made you a promise which I told you about before. Wait here to receive this promise. ⁵John baptized people with^a water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

Jesus Is Carried Up into Heaven

⁶The apostles were all together. They asked Jesus, “Lord, are you at this time going to give the kingdom back to Israel?”

⁷Jesus said to them, “The Father is the only One who has the authority to decide dates and times. These things are not for you to know. ⁸But the Holy Spirit will come to you. Then you will receive power. You will be my witnesses—in Jerusalem, in all of Judea, in Samaria, and in every part of the world.”

⁹After he said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up.

^aOr in.

A cloud hid him from their sight. ¹⁰As he was going, they were looking into the sky. Suddenly, two men wearing white clothes stood beside them. ¹¹They said, "Men of Galilee, why are you standing here looking into the sky? You saw Jesus taken away from you into heaven. He will come back in the same way you saw him go."

A New Apostle Is Chosen

¹²Then they went back to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives. (This mountain is about half a mile from Jerusalem.) ¹³When they entered the city, they went to a room upstairs where they were staying. Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James (the son of Alphaeus), Simon (known as the Zealot), and Judas (the son of James) were there. ¹⁴They all continued praying together. Some women, including Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Jesus' brothers were also there with the apostles.

¹⁵During this time there was a meeting of the believers. (There were about 120 of them.) Peter stood up and said, ¹⁶⁻¹⁷"Brothers, in the Scriptures the Holy Spirit said through David that something must happen. The Spirit was talking about Judas, one of our own group, who served together with us. The Spirit said that Judas would lead men to arrest Jesus. ¹⁸Judas bought a field with the money he got for his evil act. (But Judas fell to his death, his body burst open, and all his intestines poured out.) ¹⁹Everyone in Jerusalem learned about this. This is why they named the field Akeldama. (In their language Akeldama means "field of blood.") ²⁰In the book of Psalms, this is written:

'May his place be empty;

Let no one live in it.'

Psalm 69:25

And it is also written:

'Let another man take his place as leader.'

Psalm 109:8

²¹⁻²²So now a man must join us and become a witness of Jesus' resurrection. He must be one of the men who were part of our group during all the time the Lord Jesus was with us. He must have been with us from the time of John's baptism until the day when Jesus was carried up from us to heaven."

²³They put the names of two men before the group. One was

Joseph Barsabbas, who was also called Justus. The other was Matthias. ²⁴⁻²⁵Then they prayed, "Lord, you know the minds of all men. Show us which one of these two men you have chosen to do this work. Judas turned away from it and went where he belongs. Lord, show us which man should take his place as an apostle!" ²⁶Then they used lots to choose between them, and the lots showed that Matthias was the one. So he became an apostle with the other 11.

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

2 When the day of Pentecost came they were all together in one place. ²Suddenly a noise came from heaven that sounded like a strong wind blowing. This noise filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³They saw something that looked like flames of fire. The flames were separated and stood over each person there. ⁴They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they began to speak different languages. The Holy Spirit was giving them the power to speak these languages.

⁵There were some religious Jews staying in Jerusalem who were from every country in the world. ⁶When they heard this noise, a crowd came together. They were all surprised, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. ⁷They were completely amazed at this. They said, "Look! Aren't all these men that we hear speaking from Galilee?" ⁸But each of us hears them in his own language. How is this possible? We are from different places: ⁹Parthia, Media, Elam, Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, the areas of Libya near Cyrene, Rome ¹¹(both Jews and converts), Crete and Arabia. But we hear these men telling in our own languages about the great things God has done!" ¹²They were all amazed and confused. They asked each other, "What does this mean?" ¹³But others were making fun of them, saying, "They have had too much wine."

Peter Speaks to the People

¹⁴But Peter stood up with the 11 apostles. In a loud voice he spoke to the crowd: "Fellow Jews, and all of you who are in Jerusalem, listen to me. Pay attention to what I have to say.

¹⁵These men are not drunk, as you think; it is only nine o'clock in the morning! ¹⁶But Joel the prophet wrote about what is happening here today:

¹⁷'God says: In the last days,

I will pour out my Spirit upon all people.

Your sons and daughters will prophesy.

Your young men will see visions.

Your old men will have special dreams.

¹⁸At that time I will pour out my Spirit

to my servants, men and women,

and they will prophesy.

¹⁹I will show amazing things in the sky above.

I will give proofs on the earth below.

There will be blood, fire, and thick smoke.

²⁰The sun will be changed into darkness,

and the moon will become red like blood

before the great and glorious day of the Lord comes.

²¹And whoever calls to the Lord for help

will be saved.'

Joel 2:28-32

²²"Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus from Nazareth was a very special man. God clearly showed this to you by the miracles, wonders, and signs God did through him. You all know this, because it happened right here among you. ²³Jesus was given to you, and you killed him. With the help of evil men you nailed him to a cross. But God knew all this would happen. This was God's plan which he had made long ago. ²⁴God raised Jesus from death and set him free from the pain of death. Death could not hold him. ²⁵For David said this about him:

'I saw the Lord before me always;

he is at my right side so I will not be moved.

²⁶So my heart was glad,

and my mouth spoke with joy.

Yes, even my body will live with hope;

²⁷because you will not leave my soul

in the place of death."

You will not let the body of your Holy One

rot in the grave.

^{27a} Or *Hades*.

²⁸You taught me how to live.
 You will come close to me,
 and give me great joy.'

Psalm 16:8-11

²⁹"Brothers, I can tell you truly about David, our ancestor. He died and was buried. His grave is still here with us today. ³⁰David was a prophet and knew what God had said. God had promised David that he would make a person from David's family a king just as he was. ³¹David knew this before it happened. That is why he said:

'He was not left in the place of death.
 His body did not rot in the grave.'

David was talking about the Christ^a rising from death. ³²So Jesus is the One God raised from death! And we are all witnesses to this. ³³Jesus was lifted up to heaven and is now at God's right side. The Father has given the Holy Spirit to Jesus as he promised. So now Jesus has poured out that Spirit. This is what you see and hear. ³⁴David was not the one who was lifted up to heaven. But he said:

'The Lord [God] said to my Lord [Christ]:
 Sit at my right side,

³⁵until I put your enemies under your control.'^b *Psalm 110:1*

³⁶"So, all the people of Israel should know this truly: God has made Jesus both Lord and Christ. He is the man you nailed to the cross!"

³⁷When the people heard this, they were sick at heart. They asked Peter and the other apostles, "What shall we do?"

³⁸Peter said to them, "Change your hearts and lives and be baptized, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹This promise is for you. It is also for your children and for all who are far away. It is for everyone the Lord our God calls to himself."

⁴⁰Peter warned them with many other words. He begged them, "Save yourselves from the evil of today's people!" ⁴¹Then those people who accepted what Peter said were baptized. About 3,000 people were added to the number of believers that day. ⁴²They spent their time learning the apostles' teaching. And they continued to share, to break bread, and to pray together.

^{31a} Or *Messiah*. ^{35b} Or *until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet*.

The Believers Share

⁴³The apostles were doing many powerful and amazing things; and everyone felt great respect for God. ⁴⁴All the believers stayed together and shared everything. ⁴⁵They sold their land and the things they owned. Then they divided the money and gave it to those who needed it. ⁴⁶The believers met together in the temple every day. They all had the same purpose. They broke bread in their homes, happy to share their food with generous hearts. ⁴⁷They praised God, and all the people liked them. More and more people were being saved every day; the Lord was adding those people to the group of believers.

Peter Heals a Crippled Man

3 One day Peter and John went to the temple at three o'clock in the afternoon. This was the time for the daily prayer service. ²A man who had been crippled all his life was at the temple gate called Beautiful. Every day he was carried to this gate to beg. He would ask for money from the people going into the temple. ³The man saw Peter and John going into the temple and asked them for money. ⁴Peter and John looked straight at him and said, "Look at us!" ⁵The man looked at them; he thought they were going to give him some money. ⁶But Peter said, "I don't have any silver or gold, but I do have something else I can give you: By the power of Jesus Christ from Nazareth—walk!" ⁷Then Peter took the man's right hand and lifted him up. Immediately the man's feet and ankles became strong. ⁸He jumped up, stood on his feet, and began to walk. He went into the temple with them, walking and jumping, and praising God. ⁹⁻¹⁰All the people recognized him. They knew he was the crippled man who always sat by the Beautiful Gate begging for money. Now they saw this same man walking and praising God. The people were amazed. They could not understand how this could happen.

Peter Speaks to the People

¹¹The man was holding on to Peter and John. All the people were amazed and ran to Peter and John at Solomon's Porch. ¹²When Peter saw this, he said to them, "Men of Israel, why are

you surprised? You are looking at us as if it were our own power that made this man walk. Do you think this happened because we are good? No! ¹³The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our ancestors, gave glory to Jesus, his servant. But you gave him up to be killed. Pilate decided to let him go free, but you told Pilate you did not want Jesus. ¹⁴He was pure and good, but you said you did not want him. You told Pilate to give you a murderer instead of Jesus. ¹⁵And so you killed the One who gives life! But God raised him from death. We are witnesses to this. ¹⁶It was the power of Jesus that made this crippled man well. This happened because we trusted in the power of Jesus. You can see this man, and you know him. He was made completely well because of trust in Jesus. You all saw it happen!

¹⁷“Brothers, I know you did those things to Jesus because you did not understand what you were doing. Your leaders did not understand either. ¹⁸God said this would happen. He said through the prophets that his Christ^a would suffer. And now God has made these things come true in this way. ¹⁹So you must change your hearts and lives! Come back to God and he will forgive your sins. ²⁰Then the Lord will give you times of spiritual rest. He will give you Jesus, the One he chose to be the Christ. ²¹But Jesus must stay in heaven until the time comes when all things will be made right again. God told about this time long ago when he spoke through his holy prophets. ²²Moses said, ‘The Lord your God will give you a prophet like me. He will come from among your own people. You must obey everything he tells you. ²³And if anyone refuses to obey that prophet, then he will die, separated from God’s people.’^b ²⁴Samuel, and all the other prophets who spoke for God after Samuel, told about this time now. ²⁵You have received what the prophets talked about, and you have received the agreement God made with your fathers. He said to your father Abraham, ‘I will bless all people on earth through one of your children.’^c ²⁶God has raised up his servant and sent him to you first. God sent him to bless you by turning each of you away from doing evil things.”

^{18a} Or *Messiah*. ^{23b} Deuteronomy 18:15, 19. ^{25c} Genesis 22:18; 26:24.

Peter and John Before the Jewish Council

4 While Peter and John were speaking to the people, a group of men came up to them. There were Jewish priests, the captain of the soldiers that guarded the temple, and some Sadducees. ²They were upset because the two apostles were teaching the people. Peter and John were preaching that people will rise from death through the power of Jesus. ³The Jewish leaders grabbed Peter and John and put them in jail. It was already night, so they kept them in jail until the next day. ⁴But many of those who heard the message believed. There were now about 5,000 men in the group of believers.

⁵The next day the Jewish leaders, the older Jewish leaders, and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. ⁶Annas (the high priest), Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and everyone from the high priest's family were there. ⁷They made Peter and John stand before them. The Jewish leaders asked them: By what power or authority did you do this?"

⁸Then Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit. He said to them, "Rulers of the people and you older leaders: ⁹Are you questioning us about a good deed that was done to a crippled man? Are you asking us who made him well? ¹⁰We want all of you and all the Jewish people to know that this man was made well by the power of Jesus Christ from Nazareth! You nailed him to a cross, but God raised him from death. This man was crippled, but he is now well and able to stand here before you because of the power of Jesus! ¹¹He is

‘the stone that you builders
thought was not important.
But this stone has become
the cornerstone.’

Psalm 118:22

¹²Jesus is the only One who can save people. His name is the only power in the world that has been given to save people. And we must be saved through him!"

¹³The Jewish leaders saw that Peter and John were not afraid to speak. They understood that these men had no special training or education. So they were amazed. Then they realized that Peter and John had been with Jesus. ¹⁴They saw the crippled man standing there beside the two apostles. They saw that he was healed. So they could say nothing against them. ¹⁵The Jew-

ish leaders told them to leave the meeting. Then the leaders talked to each other about what they should do. ¹⁶They said, "What shall we do with these men? Everyone in Jerusalem knows that they have done a great miracle! We cannot say it is not true. ¹⁷But we must warn them not to talk to people anymore using that name. Then this thing will not spread among the people."

¹⁸So they called Peter and John in again. They told them not to speak or to teach at all in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹But Peter and John answered them, "What do you think is right? What would God want? Should we obey you or God? ²⁰We cannot keep quiet. We must speak about what we have seen and heard." ²¹⁻²²The Jewish leaders could not find a way to punish them because all the people were praising God for what had been done. (This miracle was a proof from God. The man who was healed was more than 40 years old!) So the Jewish leaders warned the apostles again and let them go free.

Peter and John Return to the Believers

²³Peter and John left the meeting of Jewish leaders and went to their own group. They told them everything that the leading priests and the older Jewish leaders had said to them. ²⁴When the believers heard this, they prayed to God with one purpose. They prayed, "Lord, you are the One who made the sky, the earth, the sea, and everything in the world. ²⁵Our father David was your servant. With the help of the Holy Spirit he said:

'Why are the nations shouting?
Why are the people of the world
planning useless things?
It is hopeless!

²⁶The kings of the earth prepare to fight,
and the rulers come together
against the Lord
and against his Christ."

Psalms 2:1-2

²⁷These things really happened when Herod, Pontius Pilate, the nations, and the Jewish people all 'came together' against Jesus here in Jerusalem. Jesus is your holy Servant. He is the One you [God] made to be the Christ. ²⁸These people that

^{26a} Or *Messiah*.

'came together' against Jesus made your plan happen; it happened because of your power and your will. ²⁹And now, Lord, listen to what they are saying. They are trying to make us afraid! Lord, we are your servants. Help us to speak your word without fear. ³⁰Help us to be brave by showing us your power; make sick people well, give proofs, and make miracles happen by the power of Jesus, your holy Servant."

³¹After they had prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke God's word without fear.

The Believers Share

³²The group of believers were joined in their hearts, and they had the same spirit. No person in the group said that the things he had were his own. Instead, they shared everything. ³³With great power the apostles were telling that the Lord Jesus was truly raised from death. And God blessed all the believers very much. ³⁴They all received the things they needed. Everyone that owned fields or houses sold them. They brought the money ³⁵and gave it to the apostles. Then each person was given what he needed.

³⁶One of the believers was named Joseph. The apostles called him Barnabas. (This name means "one who encourages.") He was a Levite, born in Cyprus. ³⁷Joseph owned a field. He sold it, brought the money, and gave it to the apostles.

Ananias and Sapphira

5 A man named Ananias and his wife Sapphira sold some land. ²But he gave only part of the money to the apostles. He secretly kept some of it for himself. His wife knew about this, and she agreed to it. ³Peter said, "Ananias, why did you let Satan rule your heart? You lied to the Holy Spirit. Why did you keep part of the money you received for the land for yourself? ⁴Before you sold the land, it belonged to you. And even after you sold it, you could have used the money any way you wanted. Why did you think of doing this? You lied to God, not to men!" ⁵⁻⁶When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. Some young men came in, wrapped up his body, carried it out,

and buried it. And everyone who heard about this was filled with fear.

⁷About three hours later his wife came in. She did not know what had happened. ⁸Peter said to her, "Tell me how much money you got for your field. Was it this much?"

Sapphira answered, "Yes, that was the price."

⁹Peter said to her, "Why did you and your husband agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look! The men who buried your husband are at the door! They will carry you out." ¹⁰At that moment Sapphira fell down by his feet and died. The young men came in and saw that she was dead. They carried her out and buried her beside her husband. ¹¹The whole church and all the others who heard about these things were filled with fear.

Proofs from God

¹²The apostles did many miracles and powerful things among the people. And they would all meet together on Solomon's Porch. ¹³None of the others dared to join them, even though the people were saying good things about them. ¹⁴More and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to the group of believers. ¹⁵As Peter was passing by, the people brought their sick into the streets and put them on beds and mats so at least Peter's shadow might fall on them. ¹⁶Crowds came from all the towns around Jerusalem. They brought their sick and those who were bothered by evil spirits, and all of them were healed.

The Jews Try to Stop the Apostles

¹⁷The high priest and all his friends (a group called the Sadducees) became very jealous. ¹⁸They took the apostles and put them in jail. ¹⁹But during the night, an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail. He led the apostles outside and said, ²⁰"Go and stand in the temple. Tell the people everything about this new life." ²¹When the apostles heard this, they went into the temple and began to teach. It was early in the morning.

The high priest and his friends arrived. They called a meeting of the Jewish leaders and all the important older men of the Jews. They sent some men to the jail to bring the apostles to

them. ²²When the men went to the jail, they could not find the apostles. So they went back and told the Jewish leaders about this. ²³They said, "The jail was closed and locked. The guards were standing at the doors. But when we opened the doors, the jail was empty!" ²⁴Hearing this, the captain of the temple guards and the leading priests were confused. They wondered, "What will happen because of this?" ²⁵Then someone came and told them, "Listen! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple and teaching the people!" ²⁶Then the captain and his men went out and brought the apostles back. But the soldiers did not use force, because they were afraid that the people would kill them with rocks.

²⁷The soldiers brought the apostles to the meeting and made them stand before the Jewish leaders. The high priest questioned them. ²⁸He said, "We gave you strict orders not to go on teaching in that name. But look what you have done! You have filled Jerusalem with your teaching. You are trying to make us responsible for this man's death."

²⁹Peter and the other apostles answered, "We must obey God, not men! ³⁰You killed Jesus. You hung him on a cross. But God, the same God our fathers had, raised Jesus up from death! ³¹Jesus is the One whom God raised to be on his right side. God made Jesus our Leader and Savior. God did this so that all Jews could change their hearts and lives and have their sins forgiven. ³²We saw all these things happen. The Holy Spirit also proves that these things are true. God has given the Spirit to all who obey him."

³³When the Jewish leaders heard this, they became very angry and wanted to kill them. ³⁴One of the Pharisees, named Gamaliel, stood up in the meeting. He was a teacher of the law, and all the people respected him. He ordered the apostles to leave the meeting for a little while. ³⁵Then he said to the leaders, "Men of Israel, be careful of what you are planning to do to these men! ³⁶Remember when Theudas appeared? He said that he was a great man and about 400 men joined him. But he was killed, and all his followers were scattered. They were able to do nothing. ³⁷Later, a man named Judas came from Galilee at the time of the registration. He led a group of followers, too. He was also killed, and all his followers were scattered. ³⁸And

so now I tell you: Stay away from these men. Leave them alone. If their plan comes from men, it will fail. ³⁹But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop them. You might even be fighting against God himself!"

The Jewish leaders agreed with what Gamaliel said. ⁴⁰They called the apostles in again. They beat the apostles and told them not to speak in the name of Jesus again. Then they let them go free. ⁴¹The apostles left the meeting full of joy because they were given the honor of suffering disgrace for the name [of Jesus]. ⁴²The apostles did not stop teaching. Every day in the temple and in people's homes they continued to tell the Good News—that Jesus is the Christ.^a

Seven Men Chosen for a Special Work

6 More and more people were becoming followers of Jesus. But during this same time, the Greek-speaking followers had an argument with the other Jewish followers. The Greek-speaking Jews said that their widows were not getting their share of the food that was given out every day. ²The 12 apostles called the whole group of followers together. They said, "It is not right for us to stop our work of teaching God's word in order to serve tables. ³So, brothers, choose seven of your own men who are known to be full of wisdom and the Spirit. We will put them in charge of this work. ⁴Then we can use all our time to pray and to teach the word."

⁵The whole group liked the idea. So they chose these seven men: Stephen (a man with great faith and full of the Holy Spirit), Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus (a man from Antioch who had become a Jew). ⁶Then they put these men before the apostles. The apostles prayed and laid their hands on them.

⁷The word of God was reaching more people, and the group of followers in Jerusalem became larger and larger. A great number of the Jewish priests believed and obeyed.

The Jews Against Stephen

⁸Stephen was richly blessed by God. God gave him the power to do great miracles and signs among the people. ⁹But some

^{42a} Or *Messiah*.

Jews were against him. They belonged to a synagogue of Free Men (as it was called). This synagogue was also for Jews from Cyrene and from Alexandria. Jews from Cilicia and Asia were also with them. They all came and argued with Stephen.

¹⁰But the Spirit was helping him to speak with wisdom. His words were so strong that the Jews could not argue with him. ¹¹So they paid some men to say, "We heard him say things against Moses and against God!" ¹²This upset the people, the older Jewish leaders, and the teachers of the law. They came to Stephen, grabbed him and brought him to a meeting of the Jewish leaders. ¹³They brought in some men to tell lies about Stephen. They said, "This man is always saying things against this holy place [the temple] and the law of Moses. ¹⁴We heard him say that Jesus from Nazareth will destroy this place. He also said that Jesus will change the things that Moses told us to do." ¹⁵All the people in the meeting were watching Stephen closely. His face looked like the face of an angel.

Stephen's Speech

7 The high priest said to Stephen, "Are these things true?" ²Stephen answered, "Brothers and fathers, listen to me. Our glorious God appeared to Abraham, our father. Abraham was in Mesopotamia before he lived in Haran. ³God said to Abraham, 'Leave your country and your relatives. Go to another country that I will show you.'^a ⁴So Abraham left the country of Chaldea and went to live in Haran. After Abraham's father died, God sent him to this place where you now live. ⁵God did not give Abraham any of this land, not even a foot of it. But God promised that in the future he would give him this land for himself and for his children. (This was before Abraham had any children.) ⁶This is what God said to him: 'Your children will live in another country as strangers. The people there will make them slaves and do cruel things to them for 400 years. ⁷But I will judge that nation which makes them slaves.'^b And God also said, 'After those things happen, your children will come out of that country. Then they will worship me in this place.'^c ⁸God made an agreement with Abraham; the sign for this agreement was circumcision. And so when Abraham had

^{3a} Genesis 12:1. ^{7b} Genesis 15:13-14. ^{7c} Genesis 15:14 and Exodus 3:12.

his son Isaac, Abraham circumcised him when he was eight days old. Isaac also circumcised his son Jacob, and Jacob did the same for his sons, the 12 fathers.

⁹“These fathers became jealous of Joseph and sold him to be a slave in Egypt. But God was with him. ¹⁰Joseph had many troubles there, but God saved him from all those troubles. Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, liked Joseph and respected him because of the wisdom that God gave him. Pharaoh made him governor of Egypt. He put Joseph in charge of all the people in Pharaoh’s house.

¹¹“Then all the land of Egypt and of Canaan became so dry that nothing would grow there. This made the people suffer very much. Our fathers could not find anything to eat. ¹²But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our fathers there. This was their first trip to Egypt. ¹³Then they went there a second time. This time, Joseph told his brothers who he was. And Pharaoh learned about Joseph’s family. ¹⁴Then Joseph sent some men to invite Jacob, his father, to come to Egypt. He also invited all his relatives (75 persons altogether). ¹⁵So Jacob went down to Egypt, where he and our fathers died. ¹⁶Later their bodies were moved to Shechem and put in a grave there. (It was the same grave that Abraham had bought in Shechem from the sons of Hamor for a sum of money.)

¹⁷“The number of people in Egypt grew large. There were more and more of our people there. (The promise that God made to Abraham was soon to come true.) ¹⁸Then a different king began to rule Egypt. He knew nothing about Joseph. ¹⁹This king tricked our people and was cruel to our fathers. He forced them to put their children outside to die. ²⁰At that time Moses was born, and he was lovely in God’s sight. For three months Moses was cared for in his father’s house. ²¹When they put Moses outside, Pharaoh’s daughter took him. She raised him as if he were her own son. ²²Moses was taught all the wisdom of the Egyptians. He was a powerful man in what he said and did.

²³“When Moses was about 40 years old, he thought it would be good to visit his brothers, the people of Israel. ²⁴Moses saw an Egyptian mistreating a Jew. So he defended the Jew and punished the Egyptian for hurting him. Moses killed the Eryp-

tian. ²⁵ Moses thought that his fellow Jews would understand that God was using him to save them, but they did not understand. ²⁶ The next day, Moses saw two Jewish men fighting. He tried to make peace between them. He said, 'Men, you are brothers! Why are you hurting each other?' ²⁷ The man who was hurting the other man pushed Moses away. He said, 'Who made you our ruler and judge?' ²⁸ Will you kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?' ²⁹ When Moses heard him say this, he left Egypt. He went to live in the land of Midian where he was a stranger. While Moses lived in Midian, he had two sons.

³⁰ "After 40 years Moses was in the desert near Mount Sinai. An angel appeared to him in the flame of a burning bush. ³¹ When Moses saw this, he was amazed. He went near to look closer at it. Moses heard the Lord's voice. ³² The Lord said, 'I am the same God your fathers had—the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.'^a Moses began to shake with fear and was afraid to look. ³³ The Lord said to him, 'Take off your shoes, because the place where you are now standing is holy ground. ³⁴ I saw my people suffer in Egypt, and I heard their crying. I have come down to save them. And now, Moses, I am sending you back to Egypt.'^b

³⁵ "This Moses was the same man the Jews said they did not want. They had said to him, 'Who made you a ruler and judge?' Moses is the same man God sent to be a ruler and savior, with the help of an angel. This was the angel Moses saw in the burning bush. ³⁶ So Moses led the people out of Egypt. He worked wonders and miracles in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and then in the desert for 40 years. ³⁷ This is the same Moses that said to the Jewish people: 'God will give you a prophet like me. He will come from among your own people.'^c ³⁸ This is the same Moses who was with the gathering of the Jews in the desert. He was with the angel that spoke to him at Mount Sinai, and he was with our fathers. He received commandments that give life, and he gave those commandments to us.

³⁹ "But our fathers did not want to obey Moses. They rejected him and wanted to go back to Egypt again. ⁴⁰ They said to Aaron, 'Make us some gods to lead us! Moses brought us out of

^{32a} Exodus 3:6. ^{34b} Exodus 3:5-10. ^{37c} Deuteronomy 18:15.

Egypt, but we don't know what has happened to him.' ⁴¹So the people made an idol that looked like a calf. Then they brought sacrifices to it. The people were proud of what they had made with their own hands! ⁴²But God turned against them. He did not try to stop them from worshiping the sun, moon, and stars. This is what is written in the book of the prophets: God says,

'People of Israel, you did not bring me sacrifices
and offerings in the desert for 40 years;

You carried with you the tent [place of worship]

⁴³ for Moloch [a false god]

and the image of the star of your god Rephan.

These were the idols you made to worship.

So I will send you away beyond Babylon.' *Amos 5:25-27*

⁴⁴"The tent where God spoke to our fathers was with the Jews in the desert. God told Moses how to make this tent, and he made it like the plan God showed him. ⁴⁵Later, Joshua led our fathers to capture the lands of the other nations. Our people went in and God drove the other people out. When our people went into this new land, they took with them this same tent. They received this tent from their fathers and kept it until the time of David. ⁴⁶God was very pleased with David. He asked God to let him build a house for him, the God of Jacob.

⁴⁷But Solomon was the one who built the temple.

⁴⁸"But the Most High does not live in houses that men build with their hands. This is what the prophet says:

'The Lord says,

Heaven is my throne.

⁴⁹ The earth is a place to rest my feet.

What kind of house can you build for me?

There is no place where I need to rest!

⁵⁰Remember, I made all these things!' " *Isaiah 66:1-2*

⁵¹Stephen continued speaking: "You stubborn Jewish leaders! You have not given your hearts to God! You won't listen to him! You are always against what the Holy Spirit is trying to tell you. Your fathers were like this, and you are just like them!

⁵²Your fathers tried to persecute every prophet who ever lived. Those prophets said long ago that the Righteous One would come, but your fathers killed them. And now you have turned

against the Righteous One and killed him. ⁵³You received the law which God gave you through his angels. But you don't obey it!"

Stephen Is Killed

⁵⁴When the Jewish leaders heard Stephen saying all these things, they became very angry. They were so mad that they were grinding their teeth at Stephen. ⁵⁵But Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit. He looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God. He saw Jesus standing at God's right side. ⁵⁶He said, "Look! I see heaven open. And I see the Son of Man standing at God's right side!"

⁵⁷Then the Jewish leaders all shouted loudly. They covered their ears with their hands and all ran at Stephen. ⁵⁸They took him out of the city and threw rocks at him until he was dead. The men who told lies against Stephen gave their coats to a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹While they were throwing rocks, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" ⁶⁰He fell on his knees and cried in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" After Stephen said this, he died.

8 Saul agreed to the killing of Stephen.

Trouble for the Believers

²⁻³Some religious men buried Stephen and cried very loudly for him. On that day the Jews began persecuting the church in Jerusalem. The Jews made them suffer very much. Saul was also trying to destroy the church. He went from house to house, dragging out men and women and putting them in jail. All the believers, except the apostles, went to different places in Judea and Samaria. ⁴And everywhere they were scattered, they told people the Good News.

Philip Preaches in Samaria

⁵Philip went to the city of Samaria and preached about the Christ.⁶ The people there heard Philip and saw the miracles he was doing. They all listened carefully to the things he said. ⁷Many of these people had evil spirits in them, but Philip made

^{5a} Or Messiah.

the evil spirits leave them. The spirits made a loud noise when they came out. Many weak and crippled people were also healed. ⁸So the people in that city were very happy.

⁹But there was a man named Simon in that city. Before Philip came there, Simon had practiced magic. He amazed all the people of Samaria with his magic. He boasted and called himself a great man. ¹⁰All the people—the least important and the most important—paid attention to what Simon said. They said, “This man has the power of God, called ‘the Great Power!’” ¹¹Simon amazed them with his magic tricks so long that the people became his followers. ¹²But Philip told them the Good News about the kingdom of God and the power of Jesus Christ. Men and women believed Philip and were baptized. ¹³Simon himself believed and was baptized. He stayed very close to Philip. When he saw the miracles and the very powerful things that Philip did, Simon was amazed.

¹⁴The apostles were still in Jerusalem. They heard that the people of Samaria had accepted the word of God. So they sent Peter and John to them. ¹⁵When Peter and John arrived, they prayed that the Samaritan believers might receive the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶These people had been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, but the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them. ¹⁷Then, when the two apostles began laying their hands on the people, they received the Holy Spirit.

¹⁸Simon saw that the Spirit was given to people when the apostles laid their hands on them. So he offered the apostles money. ¹⁹He said, “Give me also this power so that when I lay my hands on a person, he will receive the Holy Spirit.”

²⁰Peter said to him, “May you and your money both be destroyed! You thought you could buy God’s gift with money. ²¹You cannot share with us in this work because your heart is not right before God. ²²Change your heart! Turn away from this evil thing you have done and pray to the Lord. Maybe he will forgive you for thinking this. ²³I see that you are full of bitter jealousy and ruled by sin.”

²⁴Simon answered, “Both of you pray for me to the Lord. Pray that the things you have said will not happen to me!”

²⁵Then the two apostles told the people what they had seen. And after the apostles had given the message of the Lord, they

went back to Jerusalem. On the way, they went through many Samaritan towns and preached the Good News to the people.

Philip Teaches a Man from Ethiopia

²⁶An angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Get ready and go south. Go to the road that leads down to Gaza from Jerusalem—the desert road." ²⁷So Philip got ready and went. On the road he saw a man from Ethiopia, a eunuch who was an important officer in the service of Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians. He was responsible for taking care of all her money. He had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and ²⁸now he was on his way home. He was sitting in his chariot and reading from the book of Isaiah, the prophet. ²⁹The Spirit said to Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it." ³⁰So Philip ran toward the chariot. He heard the man reading from Isaiah, the prophet. Philip asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

³¹He answered, "How can I understand? I need someone to explain it to me!" Then he invited Philip to climb in and sit with him. ³²The verse of Scripture that he was reading was this:

"He was like a sheep when it is taken to be killed.

He was like a lamb that makes no sound
when someone cuts off its wool.

He says nothing.

³³He was shamed; and all his rights
were taken away.

There will be no story
about his family,

for his life on earth has ended."

Isaiah 53:7-8

³⁴The officer said to Philip, "Please tell me, who is the prophet talking about? Is he talking about himself or about someone else?" ³⁵Philip began to speak. He started with this same Scripture and told the man the Good News about Jesus.

³⁶While they were traveling down the road, they came to some water. The officer said, "Look! Here is water! What is stopping me from being baptized?" ^{37a} ³⁸Then the officer commanded the chariot to stop. Both Philip and the officer went

^{37a} Some late Greek copies of Acts add verse 37: *Philip answered, 'If you believe with all your heart, you can.' The officer said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.'*

down into the water, and Philip baptized him. ³⁹When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord took Philip away; the officer never saw him again. The officer continued on his way home, full of joy. ⁴⁰But Philip appeared in a city called Azotus and preached the Good News in all the towns on the way from Azotus to Caesarea.

Saul Is Converted

9 Saul was still trying to frighten the followers of the Lord and was saying he would kill them. So he went to the high priest ²and asked him to write letters to the synagogues in the city of Damascus. Saul wanted the high priest to give him the authority to find people in Damascus who were followers of the [Christ's] Way. If he found any there, men or women, he would arrest them and bring them back to Jerusalem.

³So Saul went to Damascus. As he came near the city, a bright light from heaven suddenly flashed around him. ⁴As Saul fell to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him: "Saul, Saul! Why are you persecuting me?"

⁵Saul said, "Who are you, Lord?"

The voice answered, "I am Jesus. I am the One you are persecuting. ⁶Get up now and go into the city. Someone there will tell you what you must do."

⁷The men traveling with Saul stood there but they said nothing. They heard the voice, but they saw no one. ⁸Saul got up from the ground. He opened his eyes, but he could not see. So the men with Saul took his hand and led him into Damascus. ⁹For three days Saul could not see, and he did not eat or drink.

¹⁰There was a follower of Jesus in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord spoke to Ananias in a vision: "Ananias!"

Ananias answered, "Here I am, Lord."

¹¹The Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight Street and find the house of Judas. Ask for a man named Saul from the city of Tarsus. He is there now, praying.

¹²Saul has seen a vision in which a man named Ananias comes to him and lays his hands on him. Then he sees again."

¹³But Ananias answered, "Lord, many people have told me about this man and the terrible things he did to your saints in

Jerusalem. ¹⁴Now he has come here to Damascus. The leading priests have given him the power to arrest everyone who believes in you."

¹⁵But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! I have chosen Saul for an important work. He must tell about me to non-Jews, to kings, and to the people of Israel. ¹⁶I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

¹⁷So Ananias went to the house of Judas. He laid his hands on Saul and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus sent me. He is the one you saw on the road on your way here. He sent me so that you can see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." ¹⁸Immediately, something that looked like scales fell from Saul's eyes. He was able to see again! Then Saul got up and was baptized. ¹⁹After eating some food, his strength returned.

Saul Preaches in Damascus

Saul stayed with the followers of Jesus in Damascus for a few days. ²⁰Soon he began to preach about Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "Jesus is the Son of God!"

²¹All the people who heard him were amazed. They said, "This is the man who was in Jerusalem. He was trying to destroy those who trust in this name! He came here to do the same thing. He came here to arrest the followers of Jesus and take them back to the leading priests."

²²But Saul became more and more powerful. His proofs that Jesus is the Christ^b were so strong that the Jews in Damascus could not argue with him.

Saul Escapes from the Jews

²³After many days, the Jews made plans to kill Saul. ²⁴They were watching the city gates day and night. They wanted to kill him, but Saul learned about their plan. ²⁵One night some followers of Saul's helped him leave the city. They lowered him in a basket through an opening in the city wall.

Saul in Jerusalem

²⁶Then Saul went to Jerusalem. He tried to join the group of followers, but they were all afraid of him. They did not believe

^{14a} Or calls on your name. ^{22b} Or Messiah.

that he was really a follower. ²⁷But Barnabas accepted Saul and took him to the apostles. Barnabas told them that Saul had seen the Lord on the road. He explained how the Lord had spoken to Saul. Then he told them how boldly Saul had preached in the name of Jesus in Damascus.

²⁸And so Saul stayed with the followers. He went everywhere in Jerusalem, preaching boldly in the name of Jesus. ²⁹He would often talk and argue with the Jews who spoke Greek, but they were trying to kill him. ³⁰When the brothers [believers] learned about this, they took Saul to Caesarea. From there they sent him to Tarsus.

³¹The church everywhere in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had a time of peace. With the help of the Holy Spirit, it became stronger and larger. It showed that it feared the Lord by the way it lived.

Peter Heals Aeneas

³²As Peter was traveling throughout the area, he visited the saints who lived in Lydda. ³³There he met a paralyzed man named Aeneas. Aeneas had not been able to leave his bed for the past eight years. ³⁴Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and make your bed!" Aeneas got up immediately. ³⁵Everyone living in Lydda and on the plain of Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

Peter in Joppa

³⁶In the city of Joppa there was a follower named Tabitha. (Her Greek name was Dorcas.) She was always doing good and helping the poor. ³⁷About that time Tabitha became sick and died. Her body was washed and put in a room upstairs. ³⁸The followers in Joppa heard that Peter was in Lydda. (Lydda is near Joppa.) So they sent two men to Peter and begged him, "Hurry, please come to us!" ³⁹Peter got ready and went with them. When he arrived, they took him to the upstairs room. All the widows stood around Peter, crying. They showed him the shirts and coats that Dorcas had made when she was still alive. ⁴⁰Peter sent everyone out of the room. He kneeled and prayed. Then he turned to the body and said, "Tabitha, stand up!" She opened her eyes and when she saw Peter, she sat up. ⁴¹He gave

her his hand and helped her up. Then he called the saints and the widows into the room. He showed them Tabitha; she was alive! ⁴²People everywhere in Joppa learned about this, and many believed in the Lord. ⁴³Peter stayed in Joppa for many days with a man named Simon who was a leatherworker.

Peter and Cornelius

10 At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius. He was an officer in the Italian group of the Roman army. ²Cornelius was a religious man. He and all the others who lived in his house worshiped God. He gave much of his money to the poor and prayed to God often. ³One afternoon about three o'clock, Cornelius saw a vision clearly. In the vision an angel of God came to him and said, "Cornelius!"

⁴Cornelius stared at the angel. He became afraid and said, "What do you want, Lord?"

The angel said, "God has heard your prayers and has seen what you give to the poor. And God remembers you. ⁵Send some men now to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon, who is also called Peter. ⁶Simon is staying with a man, also named Simon, who is a leatherworker. He has a house beside the sea." ⁷Then the angel who spoke to Cornelius left. Cornelius called two of his servants and a soldier. The soldier was a religious man who worked for Cornelius. ⁸Cornelius explained everything to these three men and sent them to Joppa.

⁹The next day as they came near Joppa, Peter was going up to the roof to pray. It was about noon. ¹⁰Peter was hungry and wanted to eat. But while the food was being prepared, he had a vision. ¹¹He saw heaven opened and something like a big sheet being lowered to earth by its four corners. ¹²In it were all kinds of animals, reptiles, and birds. ¹³Then a voice said to Peter, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat."

¹⁴But Peter said, "No, Lord! I have never eaten food that is unholy or unclean."

¹⁵But the voice said to him again, "God has made these things clean. Don't call them 'unholy!'" ¹⁶This happened three times. Then the sheet was taken back to heaven.

¹⁷While Peter was wondering what this vision meant, the men

Cornelius sent had found Simon's house. They were standing at the gate. ¹⁸They asked, "Is Simon Peter staying here?"

¹⁹Peter was still thinking about the vision. But the Spirit said to him, "Listen! Three men are looking for you. ²⁰Get up and go downstairs. Go with them and don't doubt because I have sent them to you." ²¹So Peter went down to the men. He said, "I am the man you are looking for. Why did you come here?"

²²They said, "A holy angel spoke to Cornelius, an army officer. He is a good man; he worships God. All the Jewish people respect him. The angel told Cornelius to ask you to come to his house so that he can hear what you have to say." ²³Peter asked the men to come in and spend the night.

The next day Peter got ready and went with them. Some of the brothers from Joppa went with him. ²⁴On the following day they came to Caesarea. Cornelius was waiting for them and had called together his relatives and close friends. ²⁵When Peter entered, Cornelius met him. He fell at Peter's feet and worshiped him. ²⁶But Peter helped him up, saying, "Stand up! I too am only a man." ²⁷Peter went on talking with Cornelius as they went inside. There Peter saw many people together. ²⁸He said, "You people understand that it is against our Jewish law for a Jew to associate with or visit anyone who is not a Jew. But God has shown me that I should not call any person 'unholy' or 'unclean.'" ²⁹That is why I did not argue when I was asked to come here. Now, please tell me why you sent for me."

³⁰Cornelius said, "Four days ago, I was praying in my house. It was at this same time—three o'clock in the afternoon. Suddenly, there was a man standing before me wearing shining clothes. ³¹He said, 'Cornelius! God has heard your prayer. He has seen what you give to the poor, and he remembers you. ³²So send some men to Joppa and ask Simon Peter to come. Peter is staying in the house of a man, also named Simon, who is a leatherworker. His house is beside the sea.' ³³So I sent for you immediately, and it was very good of you to come. Now we are all here before God to hear everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us."

Peter Speaks in the House of Cornelius

³⁴Peter began to speak: "I really understand now that to God every person is the same. ³⁵God accepts anyone who worships him and does what is right. It is not important what country a person comes from. ³⁶You know that God has sent his message to the people of Israel. That message is the Good News that peace has come through Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Lord of all people! ³⁷You know what has happened all over Judea. It began in Galilee after John preached to the people about baptism. ³⁸You know about Jesus from Nazareth. God made him the Christ" by giving him the Holy Spirit and power. You know how Jesus went everywhere doing good. He healed those who were ruled by the devil, for God was with Jesus. ³⁹We saw everything that Jesus did in Judea and in Jerusalem. But they killed him by nailing him to a cross. ⁴⁰Yet, on the third day, God raised Jesus to life and caused him to be seen. ⁴¹But he was not seen by all the people. Only the witnesses that God had already chosen saw him, and we are those witnesses. We ate and drank with him after he was raised from death. ⁴²He told us to preach to the people and to tell them that he is the One God chose to be the Judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³Everyone who believes in Jesus will be forgiven through his name. All the prophets say this is true."

The Holy Spirit Comes to Non-Jews

⁴⁴While Peter was still saying this, the Holy Spirit came down on all those who were listening. ⁴⁵The Jewish believers who came with Peter were amazed that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the non-Jewish people. ⁴⁶These Jewish believers heard them speaking in different languages and praising God. Then Peter said, ⁴⁷"Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we did!" ⁴⁸So Peter ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

^{38a} Or *Messiah*.

Peter Returns to Jerusalem

11 The apostles and the brothers in Judea heard that non-Jewish people had accepted God's teaching too. ²But when Peter came to Jerusalem, some Jewish believers argued with him. ³They said, "You went into the homes of people who are not Jews and are not circumcised! You even ate with them!"

⁴So Peter explained the whole story to them. ⁵He said, "I was in the city of Joppa. While I was praying, I had a vision. In the vision, I saw something which looked like a big sheet coming down from heaven. It was being lowered to earth by its four corners, and it came down very close to me. ⁶I looked inside it and saw animals, wild beasts, reptiles, and birds. ⁷I heard a voice say to me, 'Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.' ⁸But I said, 'No, Lord! I have never eaten anything that is unholy or unclean.' ⁹But the voice from heaven answered again, 'God has made these things clean. Don't call them unholy!' ¹⁰This happened three times. Then the whole thing was taken back to heaven. ¹¹Right then three men came to the house where I was staying. They were sent to me from Caesarea. ¹²The Spirit told me to go with them without doubting. These six brothers here also went with me, and we entered the house of Cornelius. ¹³He told us about the angel he saw standing in his house. The angel said to him, 'Send some men to Joppa and invite Simon Peter to come. ¹⁴He will speak words to you by which you and all the people of your house will be saved.' ¹⁵When I began my speech, the Holy Spirit came on them just as he came on us at the beginning. ¹⁶Then I remembered the words of the Lord. He said, 'John baptized in water, but you will be baptized in the Holy Spirit!' ¹⁷God gave to them the same gift that he gave to us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. So could I stop the work of God? No!"

¹⁸When the Jewish believers heard this, they stopped arguing. They praised God and said, "So God is allowing the non-Jewish people also to turn to him and live."

The Good News Comes to Antioch

¹⁹Many of the believers were scattered by the persecution that happened after Stephen was killed. Some of them went to places as far away as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch. They

were telling the message to others, but only to Jews. ²⁰Some of these believers were men from Cyprus and Cyrene. When they came to Antioch, they spoke also to Greeks, telling them the Good News about the Lord Jesus. ²¹The Lord was helping the believers, and a large number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

²²The church in Jerusalem heard about all of this, so they sent Barnabas to Antioch. ²³⁻²⁴Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and full of faith. When he reached Antioch and saw how God had blessed the people, he was glad. He encouraged all the believers in Antioch. He told them, "Always obey the Lord with all your hearts." Many people became followers of the Lord.

²⁵Then Barnabas went to the city of Tarsus to look for Saul. ²⁶When he found Saul, he brought him to Antioch. And for a whole year Saul and Barnabas met with the church and taught many people. In Antioch the followers were called "Christians" for the first time.

²⁷About that time some prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. ²⁸One of them was named Agabus. He stood up and spoke with the help of the Holy Spirit. He said, "A very hard time is coming to the whole world. There will be no food for people to eat." (This happened when Claudius was emperor.)

²⁹The followers all decided to help their brothers who lived in Judea. Each one planned to send them as much as he could.

³⁰They gathered the money and gave it to Barnabas and Saul, who brought it to the elders in Judea.

Herod Agrippa Hurts the Church

12 During that same time King Herod began to persecute some who belonged to the church. ²He ordered James, the brother of John, to be killed by the sword. ³Herod saw that the Jews liked this, so he decided to arrest Peter, too. (This happened during the time of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.)

⁴After Herod arrested Peter, he put him in jail and handed him over to be guarded by 16 soldiers. Herod planned to bring Peter before the people for trial after the Passover Feast. ⁵So Peter was kept in jail, but the church kept on praying to God for him.

Peter Leaves the Jail

⁶The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping. He was between two soldiers, bound with two chains. Other soldiers were guarding the door of the jail. ⁷Suddenly, an angel of the Lord stood there, and a light shone in the cell. The angel touched Peter on the side and woke him up. The angel said, "Hurry! Get up!" And the chains fell off his hands. ⁸The angel said to him, "Get dressed and put on your shoes." And so Peter did this. Then the angel said, "Put on your coat and follow me." ⁹So the angel went out and Peter followed him. Peter did not know if what the angel was doing was real. He thought he was seeing a vision. ¹⁰They went past the first and the second guard. When they came to the iron gate that separated them from the city, it opened itself for them. They went through the gate and walked down a street. And the angel suddenly left him.

¹¹Then Peter realized what had happened. He thought, "Now I know that the Lord really sent his angel to me. He rescued me from Herod and from all the things the Jewish people thought would happen."

¹²When he realized this, he went to the home of Mary. She was the mother of John. (John was also called Mark.) Many people were gathered there, praying. ¹³Peter knocked on the outside door. A servant girl named Rhoda came to answer it. ¹⁴She recognized Peter's voice, and she was so happy she forgot to open the door. She ran inside and announced, "Peter is at the door!"

¹⁵They said to her, "You are crazy!" But she kept on saying that it was true. So they said, "It must be Peter's angel."

¹⁶Peter continued to knock. When they opened the door, they saw him and were amazed. ¹⁷Peter made a sign with his hand to tell them to be quiet. He explained how the Lord led him out of the jail. And he said, "Tell James and the other brothers what happened." Then he left to go to another place.

¹⁸The next day the soldiers were very upset. They wondered what had happened to Peter. ¹⁹Herod looked everywhere for Peter but could not find him. So he questioned the guards and ordered that they be killed.

The Death of Herod Agrippa

Later Herod left Judea and went to the city of Caesarea, where he stayed for a while. ²⁰Herod was very angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon. But the people of those cities all came in a group to Herod. They were able to get Blastus, the king's personal servant, on their side. They asked Herod for peace because their country got its food from his country.

²¹On a chosen day Herod put on his royal robes. He sat on his throne and made a speech to the people. ²²They shouted, "This is the voice of a god, not a man!" ²³Herod did not give the glory to God. So an angel of the Lord caused him to become sick. He was eaten by worms and died.

²⁴God's message continued to spread and reach more and more people.

²⁵After Barnabas and Saul finished their task, they returned from Jerusalem. John, also called Mark, was with them.

Barnabas and Saul Chosen for a Special Work

13 In the church at Antioch there were these prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon (also called Niger), Lucius (from the city of Cyrene), Manaen (who had grown up with Herod, the ruler) and Saul. ²They were all worshiping the Lord and fasting. The Holy Spirit said to them, "Give Barnabas and Saul to me to do a special work. I have chosen them for it."

³So they fasted and prayed. They laid their hands on Barnabas and Saul and sent them out.

Barnabas and Saul in Cyprus

⁴Barnabas and Saul were sent out by the Holy Spirit. They went to the city of Seleucia. From there they sailed to the island of Cyprus. ⁵When they came to Salamis, they preached the message of God in the Jewish synagogues. John Mark was with them to help.

⁶They went across the whole island to Paphos. In Paphos they met a Jew named Bar-Jesus, who was a magician. He was a false prophet, ⁷who always stayed close to Sergius Paulus, the governor. Sergius Paulus was an intelligent man. He asked Barnabas and Saul to come to him, because he wanted to hear the message of God. ⁸But Elymas, the magician, was against them.

(Elymas is the name for Bar-Jesus in the Greek language.) He tried to stop the governor from believing [in Jesus]. ⁹But Saul was filled with the Holy Spirit. (Saul's other name was Paul.) He looked straight at Elymas ¹⁰and said, "You son of the devil! You are an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of evil tricks and lies. You are always trying to change the Lord's truths into lies! ¹¹Now the Lord will touch you and you will be blind. For a time you will not be able to see anything—not even the light from the sun."

Then everything became dark for Elymas. He walked around, trying to find someone to lead him by the hand. ¹²When the governor saw this, he believed. He was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.

Paul and Barnabas Leave Cyprus

¹³Paul and those with him sailed away from Paphos. They came to Perga, in Pamphylia. But John Mark left them and returned to Jerusalem. ¹⁴They continued their trip from Perga and went to Antioch, a city near Pisidia. In Antioch on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down. ¹⁵The law of Moses and the writings of the prophets were read. Then the leaders of the synagogue sent a message to Paul and Barnabas: "Brothers, if you have any message that will encourage the people, please speak!"

¹⁶Paul stood up. He raised his hand and said, "Men of Israel and you other people who worship God, please listen! ¹⁷The God of the people of Israel chose our fathers. He made the people great during the time they lived in Egypt. He brought them out of that country with great power. ¹⁸And he was patient with them for 40 years in the desert. ¹⁹God destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan and gave the land to his people. ²⁰All this happened in about 450 years.

"After this, God gave them judges until the time of Samuel the prophet. ²¹Then the people asked for a king. God gave them Saul, the son of Kish, from the family group of Benjamin. He was king for 40 years. ²²After God took him away, God made David their king. This is what God said about him: 'David, the son of Jesse, is the kind of man I want. He will do all that I want him to do.' ²³As he promised, God has brought one

of David's descendants to Israel to be their Savior. That descendant is Jesus. ²⁴Before Jesus came, John preached to all the people of Israel. John told the people about a baptism of changed hearts and lives. ²⁵When he was finishing his work, he said, 'Who do you think I am? I am not the Christ.^a He is coming later. I am not worthy to untie his shoes.'

²⁶"Brothers, sons in the family of Abraham, and you non-Jews who worship God, listen! The news about this salvation has been sent to us. ²⁷Those who live in Jerusalem and their leaders did not realize that Jesus was the Savior. The words that the prophets wrote are read every Sabbath day. And while the people did not understand them, they still made the words come true when they condemned Jesus. ²⁸They could not find any real reason for Jesus to die, yet they asked Pilate to have him killed. ²⁹They did to him all that the Scriptures had said. Then they took him down from the cross and laid him in a tomb. ³⁰But God raised him up from death! ³¹After this, for many days, those who had gone with Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem saw him. They are now his witnesses to the people. ³²We tell you the Good News about the promise God made to our fathers. ³³We are their children, and God has made this promise come true for us. God did this by raising Jesus from death. We read about this also in Psalm 2:

'You are my Son.

Today I have become your Father.'^b

Psalm 2:7

³⁴God raised Jesus from death. He will never go back to the grave and become dust. So God said:

'I will give you the holy and sure blessings
that I promised to David.'

Isaiah 55:3

³⁵But in another place God says:

'You will not let your Holy One
rot in the grave.'

Psalm 16:10

³⁶David did God's will during his lifetime. Then he died and was buried with his fathers. And his body did rot in the grave!

³⁷But the One God raised from death did not rot in the grave.

³⁸⁻³⁹Brothers, you must understand what we are telling you: You can have forgiveness of your sins through this One [Jesus].

^{25a} Or *Messiah*. ^{33b} Or *have begotten you*.

The law of Moses could not free you from your sins. But everyone who believes is free from all sins through him [Jesus]. ⁴⁰Be careful! Don't let what the prophets said happen to you:

⁴¹'Listen, you people who doubt!

You can wonder, and then die;
because during your time, I [God] will do
something that you will not believe.

You will not believe it,

even if someone explains it to you!"

Habakkuk 1:5

⁴²While Paul and Barnabas were leaving, the people asked them to tell them more about these things on the next Sabbath.

⁴³After the meeting, many Jews followed Paul and Barnabas. With the Jews there were many converts to the Jewish religion who also worshiped God. Paul and Barnabas were persuading them to continue trusting in God's kindness.

⁴⁴On the next Sabbath day, almost all the people in the city came to hear the word of the Lord. ⁴⁵Seeing the crowd, the Jews became very jealous. They said insulting things and argued against what Paul said. ⁴⁶But Paul and Barnabas spoke very boldly. They said, "We must speak the message of God to you first, but you refuse to listen. You are judging yourselves not worthy of having eternal life! So we will now go to the people of other nations! ⁴⁷This is what the Lord told us to do. The Lord said:

'I have made you a light for other nations,
so that you can show the way of salvation
to people all over the world.'"

Isaiah 49:6

⁴⁸When the non-Jewish people heard Paul say this, they were happy. They gave honor to the message of the Lord. And many of the people believed the message. They were the ones chosen to have life forever.

⁴⁹And so the message of the Lord was spreading through the whole country. ⁵⁰But the Jews stirred up some of the important religious women and the leaders of the city against Paul and Barnabas. They started a persecution against Paul and Barnabas and drove them out of their area. ⁵¹So Paul and Barnabas shook the dust off their feet and went to Iconium. ⁵²And the followers were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit.

Paul and Barnabas in Iconium

14 In Iconium, Paul and Barnabas went as usual to the Jewish synagogue. They spoke so well that a great many Jews and Greeks believed. ²But some of the Jews who did not believe excited the non-Jewish people and turned them against the brothers. ³But Paul and Barnabas stayed in Iconium a long time and spoke bravely for the Lord. The Lord showed that their message about his grace was true by giving them the power to work miracles and signs. ⁴The people of the city were divided. Some agreed with the Jews, but others believed the apostles.

⁵Some non-Jewish people, some Jews, and some of their rulers wanted to harm Paul and Barnabas by killing them with rocks. ⁶When Paul and Barnabas learned about this, they went to Lystra and Derbe, cities in Lycaonia, and to the areas around those cities. ⁷They announced the Good News there, too.

Paul in Lystra and Derbe

⁸In Lystra there sat a man who had been born crippled; he had never walked. ⁹This man was listening to Paul speak. Paul looked straight at him and saw that the man believed God could heal him. ¹⁰So he cried out, "Stand up on your feet!" The man jumped up and began walking around. ¹¹When the crowds saw what Paul did, they shouted in their own Lycaonian language. They said, "The gods have become like men! They have come down to us!" ¹²And the people began to call Barnabas "Zeus." They called Paul "Hermes," because he was the main speaker. ¹³The temple of Zeus was near the city. The priest of this temple brought some bulls and flowers to the city gates. The priest and the people wanted to offer a sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas.

¹⁴But when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard about this, they tore their clothes. They ran in among the people and shouted, ¹⁵"Men, why are you doing these things? We are only men, human beings like you! We are bringing you the Good News. We are telling you to turn away from these worthless things and turn to the true living God. He is the One who made the sky, the earth, the sea, and everything that is in them. ¹⁶In the past, God let all the nations do what they wanted.

¹⁷Yet he did things to prove he is real: He shows kindness to you. He gives you rain from heaven and crops at the right times. He gives you food and fills your hearts with joy.” ¹⁸Even with these words, they were barely able to keep the crowd from offering sacrifices to them.

¹⁹Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium. They persuaded the people to turn against Paul, and so they threw rocks at Paul and dragged him out of town. They thought that they had killed him. ²⁰But the followers gathered around him and he got up and went back into the town. The next day, he and Barnabas left and went to the city of Derbe.

The Return to Antioch in Syria

²¹Paul and Barnabas told the Good News in Derbe and many became followers. Paul and Barnabas returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch. ²²In those cities they made the followers of Jesus stronger. They helped them to stay in the faith. They said, “We must suffer many things to enter God’s kingdom.”

²³They chose elders for each church, with fasting and prayer. These elders were men who had trusted the Lord. So Paul and Barnabas put them in the Lord’s care.

²⁴Then they went through Pisidia and came to Pamphylia. ²⁵They preached the message in Perga, and then they went down to Attalia. ²⁶And from there they sailed away to Antioch. This is where the believers had put them into God’s care and had sent them out to do this work. And now they had finished the work.

²⁷When they arrived in Antioch, they gathered the church together. Paul and Barnabas told them all about what God had done with them. And they told how God had opened a door so that the non-Jews could believe! ²⁸They stayed there a long time with the followers.

The Meeting at Jerusalem

15 Then some men came [to Antioch] from Judea. They began teaching the non-Jewish brothers: “You cannot be saved if you are not circumcised. Moses taught us to do this.”

²Paul and Barnabas were against this teaching and argued with the men about it. So it was decided to send Paul, Barnabas, and

some other men to Jerusalem. There they could talk more about this with the apostles and elders.

³The church helped the men leave on the trip. They went through the countries of Phoenicia and Samaria, telling all about how the non-Jewish people had turned to God. This made all the brothers very happy. ⁴When they arrived in Jerusalem, the apostles, the elders, and the church welcomed them. Paul, Barnabas, and the others told about all God had done with them. ⁵But some of the believers who had belonged to the Pharisee group came forward. They said, "The non-Jewish believers must be circumcised. We must tell them to obey the law of Moses!"

⁶The apostles and the elders gathered to consider this problem. ⁷There was a long debate. Then Peter stood up and said to them, "Brothers, you know what happened in the early days. God chose me from among you to preach the Good News to the non-Jewish people. They heard the Good News from me and they believed. ⁸God, who knows the thoughts of all men, accepted them. He showed this to us by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us. ⁹To God, those people are not different from us. When they believed, he made their hearts pure. ¹⁰So now why are you testing God? You are putting a heavy load around the necks of the non-Jewish brothers. It is a load that neither we nor our fathers were able to carry. ¹¹But we believe that we and they too will be saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus!"

¹²Then the whole group became quiet. They listened to Paul and Barnabas speak. Paul and Barnabas told about all the miracles and signs that God did through them among the non-Jewish people. ¹³After they finished speaking, James spoke. He said, "Brothers, listen to me. ¹⁴Simon has told us how God showed his love for the non-Jewish people. For the first time, he accepted them and made them his people. ¹⁵The words of the prophets agree with this too, as it is written:

¹⁶"I [God] will return after this.

I will build David's house again.

It has fallen down.

But I will build again the parts of his house
that have been pulled down.

I will make his house new.

¹⁷Then all other nations will seek the Lord,
all the non-Jewish people who
are my people too.

The Lord said this,

and he is the one who does these things,

¹⁸which have been known since the beginning of
time.'

Amos 9:11-12

¹⁹"So I think we should not bother the non-Jewish brothers
who have turned to God. ²⁰Instead, we should write a letter to
them, saying:

Do not eat food that has been offered to idols.

(This makes the food unclean.)

Do not be guilty of sexual sin.

Do not taste blood.

Do not eat animals that have been strangled.

²¹They should not do these things, because there are still men
in every city who teach the law of Moses. For a long time the
words of Moses have been read in the synagogue every Sab-
bath day."

The Letter to the Non-Jewish Believers

²²The apostles, the elders, and the whole church decided to
send some of their men with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch.
They chose Judas Barsabbas and Silas who were respected by
the brothers. ²³They sent the following letter with them:

From the apostles and elders, your brothers.

To all the non-Jewish brothers in Antioch,

Syria and Cilicia:

Greetings,

²⁴We have heard that some of our men have come to
you and said things that trouble and upset you. But
we did not tell them to do this! ²⁵We have all agreed
to choose some men and send them to you. They
will be with our dear friends, Barnabas and Paul—
²⁶men who have given their lives to serve our Lord
Jesus Christ. ²⁷So we have sent Judas and Silas with
them. They will tell you the same things. ²⁸It has

pleased the Holy Spirit that you should not have a heavy load to carry, and we agree. You need to do only these things:

²⁹Do not eat any food that has been offered to idols.
Do not taste blood.
Do not eat any animals that have been strangled.
Do not be guilty of sexual sin.

If you stay away from these things, you will do well.
Good-bye.

³⁰So the men left Jerusalem and went to Antioch. There they gathered the church and gave them the letter. ³¹When they read it, they were very happy because of the encouraging letter. ³²Judas and Silas were also prophets, who said many things to encourage the brothers and make them stronger. ³³After some time Judas and Silas were sent off in peace by the brothers. They went back to the brothers who had sent them. ^{34a}

³⁵But Paul and Barnabas stayed in Antioch. They and many others preached the Good News and taught the people the message of the Lord.

Paul and Barnabas Separate

³⁶After some time, Paul said to Barnabas, "We preached the message of the Lord in many towns. We should go back to all those towns to visit the brothers and see how they are doing."

³⁷Barnabas wanted to take John Mark with them too. ³⁸But John Mark had left them at Pamphylia; he did not continue with them in the work. So Paul did not think it was a good idea to take him. ³⁹Paul and Barnabas had a serious argument about this, and they separated from each other. Barnabas sailed to Cyprus and took Mark with him. ⁴⁰But Paul chose Silas and left. The brothers in Antioch put Paul into the Lord's care. ⁴¹And he went through Syria and Cilicia, giving strength to the churches.

Timothy Goes with Paul and Silas

16 Paul came to Derbe and Lystra. A follower named Timothy was there. Timothy's mother was Jewish and a be-

^{34a} Some Greek copies add verse 34: . . . but Silas decided to remain there.

liever. His father was a Greek. ²The brothers in Lystra and Iconium respected Timothy and said good things about him. ³Paul wanted Timothy to travel with him. But all the Jews living in that area knew that Timothy's father was Greek. So Paul circumcised Timothy to please the Jews. ⁴Paul and the men with him traveled from town to town. They gave the decisions made by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. ⁵So the churches became stronger in the faith and grew larger every day.

Paul Is Called out of Asia

⁶Paul and the men with him went through the provinces of Phrygia and Galatia. The Holy Spirit did not let them preach the Good News in the province of Asia. ⁷When they came near Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia. But the Spirit of Jesus did not let them. ⁸So they passed by Mysia and went to Troas. ⁹That night Paul had a vision. In the vision, a man from Macedonia came to him. The man stood there and begged, "Come over to Macedonia. Help us!" ¹⁰After Paul had seen the vision, we immediately prepared to leave for Macedonia. We understood that God had called us to tell the Good News to those people.

The Conversion of Lydia

¹¹We left Troas in a ship, and we sailed straight to the island of Samothrace. The next day we sailed to Neapolis. ¹²Then we went by land to Philippi, the leading city in that part of Macedonia. It is also a Roman colony. We stayed there for several days.

¹³On the Sabbath day we went outside the city gate to the river. There we thought we would find a special place for prayer. Some women had gathered there, so we sat down and talked with them. ¹⁴There was a woman named Lydia from the city of Thyatira. Her job was selling purple cloth. She worshiped God. The Lord opened her mind to pay attention to what Paul was saying. ¹⁵She and all the people in her house were baptized. Then Lydia invited us to her home. She said, "If you think I am truly a believer in the Lord, then come stay in my house." And she persuaded us to stay with her.

Paul and Silas in Jail

¹⁶Once, while we were going to the place for prayer, a servant girl met us. She had a spirit in her, and she earned a lot of money for her owners by telling fortunes. ¹⁷This girl followed Paul and us. She shouted, "These men are servants of the Most High God! They are telling you how you can be saved!" ¹⁸She kept this up for many days. This bothered Paul, so he turned and said to the spirit, "By the power of Jesus Christ, I command you to come out of her!" Immediately, the spirit came out.

¹⁹The owners of the servant girl knew that now they could not use her to make money. So they grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them before the city officials in the marketplace. ²⁰They brought Paul and Silas to the Roman officials and said, "These men are Jews and are making trouble in our city. ²¹They are teaching things that are not right for us as Romans to do." ²²The crowd joined the attack against them. The Roman officials tore the clothes off Paul and Silas and had them beaten again and again. ²³Then Paul and Silas were thrown into jail. The jailer was ordered to guard them carefully. ²⁴When he heard this order, he put them far inside the jail and tied their feet between large blocks of wood.

²⁵About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God. The other prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶Suddenly, there was such a strong earthquake that it shook the foundation of the jail. At once all the doors of the jail broke open, and all the prisoners were freed from their chains. ²⁷The jailer woke up and saw that the jail doors were open. He thought that the prisoners had already escaped. So he got his sword and was about to kill himself. ²⁸But Paul shouted, "Don't hurt yourself! We are all here!"

²⁹The jailer called for someone to bring lights. Then he ran inside. Shaking with fear, he fell down before Paul and Silas. ³⁰Then he brought them outside and said, "Men, what must I do to be saved?"

³¹They said to him, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved—you and all the people in your house." ³²So Paul and Silas told the message of the Lord to the jailer and all the others in his house. ³³At that hour of the night the jailer took Paul and

Silas and washed their wounds. Then he and all his family were baptized immediately. ³⁴After this the jailer took Paul and Silas home and gave them food. He and his whole family were very happy because they now believed in God.

³⁵The next morning, the Roman officials sent the police to tell the jailer, "Let these men go free!"

³⁶The jailer said to Paul, "The officials have sent an order to let you go free. You can leave now. Go in peace."

³⁷But Paul said to the police, "They beat us in public without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens. And they threw us in jail. Now they want to make us go away quietly. No! Let them come themselves and bring us out!"

³⁸The police told the Roman officials what Paul said. When the officials heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were afraid. ³⁹So they came and told Paul and Silas they were sorry. They took Paul and Silas out of jail and asked them to leave the city. ⁴⁰So when they came out of the jail, they went to Lydia's house. There they saw some of the brothers and encouraged them. Then they left.

Paul and Silas in Thessalonica

17 They traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia and came to Thessalonica. In that city there was a Jewish synagogue. ²Paul went into the synagogue as he always did. On each Sabbath day for three weeks, Paul talked with the Jews about the Scriptures. ³He explained and proved that the Christ^a must die and then rise from death. He said, "This Jesus I am telling you about is the Christ." ⁴Some of the Jews were convinced and joined Paul and Silas. Many of the Greeks who worshiped God and many of the important women joined them.

⁵But the Jews became jealous. They got some evil men from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot. They ran to Jason's house, looking for Paul and Silas. The men wanted to bring Paul and Silas out to the people, ⁶but they did not find them. So they dragged Jason and some other brothers to the leaders of the city. The people were yelling, "These men have

^{3a} Or Messiah.

made trouble everywhere in the world. And now they have come here too! ⁷Jason is keeping them in his house. All of them do things against the laws of Caesar. They say that there is another king called Jesus.”

⁸When the people and the leaders of the city heard these things, they became very upset. ⁹They made Jason and the others put up a sum of money. Then they let the believers go free.

Paul and Silas Go to Berea

¹⁰That same night the brothers sent Paul and Silas to Berea. There they went to the Jewish synagogue. ¹¹These Jews were better than the Jews in Thessalonica. They were eager to hear what Paul and Silas said. The Jews in Berea studied the Scriptures every day to find out if these things were true. ¹²So, many of them believed. Many important Greek men and women also believed. ¹³But when the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God in Berea, they came there, too. They upset the people and made trouble. ¹⁴So the brothers quickly sent Paul away to the coast, but Silas and Timothy stayed in Berea. ¹⁵The men who took Paul went with him to Athens. Then they carried a message from Paul back to Silas and Timothy that said, “Come to me as soon as you can.”

Paul in Athens

¹⁶Paul was waiting for Silas and Timothy in Athens. He was troubled because he saw that the city was full of idols. ¹⁷In the synagogue, he talked with the Jews and the Greeks who worshiped God. He also talked every day with people in the marketplace.

¹⁸Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers argued with him.

Some of them said, “This man doesn’t know what he is talking about. What is he trying to say?” Paul was telling them the Good News of Jesus’ rising from death. They said, “He seems to be telling us about some other gods.” ¹⁹They got Paul and took him to a meeting of the Areopagus. They said, “Please explain to us this new idea that you have been teaching. ²⁰The things you are saying are new to us. We want to know what

this teaching means.” ²¹(All the people of Athens and those from other countries always used their time talking about all the newest ideas.)

²²Then Paul stood before the meeting of the Areopagus. He said, “Men of Athens, I can see that you are very religious in everything. ²³I was going through your city and I saw the things you worship. I found an altar that had these words written on it: ‘TO THE GOD WHO IS NOT KNOWN.’ You worship a god that you don’t know. This is the God I am telling you about! ²⁴He is the God who made the whole world and everything in it. He is the Lord of the land and the sky. He does not live in temples that men build! ²⁵This God is the One who gives life, breath, and everything else to people. He does not need any help from them. He has everything he needs. ²⁶From one man [Adam] God made all the different people. He made them to live everywhere in the world. He decided exactly when and where they must live. ²⁷God wanted them to look for him and perhaps search all around for him and find him. But he is not far from any of us:

²⁸‘We live in him.

We walk in him.

We are in him.’

Some of your own poets have said:

‘For we are his children.’

²⁹We are God’s children. So, you must not think that God is like something that people imagine or make. He is not like gold, silver, or rock. ³⁰In the past, people did not understand God, but God ignored this. But now, God tells everyone in the world to change his heart and life. ³¹God has decided on a day when he will judge the world. And he will be fair. God chose a man [Jesus] to judge the world. And God has proved this to everyone by raising that man from death!”

³²When the people heard about Jesus being raised from death, some of them laughed. They said, “We will hear more about this from you later.” ³³So Paul went away from them. ³⁴But some of the people believed Paul and joined him. One of those who believed was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus. Also a woman named Damaris and some others believed.

Paul in Corinth

18 Later, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. ²Here he met a Jew named Aquila, who was born in the country of Pontus. But Aquila and his wife, Priscilla, had recently moved to Corinth from Italy. They left Italy because Claudius commanded that all Jews must leave Rome. Paul went to visit Aquila and Priscilla. ³They were tentmakers, just as he was. He stayed with them and worked with them. ⁴Every Sabbath day he talked with the Jews and Greeks in the synagogue, trying to persuade them.

⁵Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia and joined Paul in Corinth. After this, Paul used all his time telling people the Good News. He showed the Jews that Jesus is the Christ.^a ⁶But they would not accept Paul's teaching and said some evil things about him. So he shook off the dust from his clothes. He said to them, "If you are not saved, it will be your own fault! I have done all I can do! After this, I will go only to non-Jewish people!" ⁷Then Paul left the synagogue and moved into the home of Titius Justus, which was next to the synagogue. This man worshiped God. ⁸Crispus, the leader of that synagogue, and all the people living in his house believed in the Lord. Many others in Corinth who listened to Paul believed and were baptized.

⁹During the night, Paul had a vision. The Lord said to him, "Don't be afraid! Continue talking to people and don't be quiet! ¹⁰I am with you. No one will hurt you because many of my people are in this city." ¹¹Paul stayed there for a year and a half, teaching God's word to the people.

Paul Is Brought Before Gallio

¹²Gallio became the governor of the country of Achaia. At that time, some of the Jews came together against Paul and took him to the court. ¹³They said to Gallio, "This man is teaching people to worship God in a way that is against our law!"

¹⁴Paul was about to say something, but Gallio spoke to the Jews. He said, "I would listen to you Jews if you were com-

^{5a} Or *Messiah*.

plaining about a crime or some wrong. ¹⁵But what you are saying concerns only questions about words and names—arguments about your own law. So you must solve this problem yourselves. I don't want to be a judge of these things!" ¹⁶Then Gallio made them leave the court.

¹⁷Then they all grabbed Sosthenes. (Sosthenes was now the leader of the synagogue.) They beat him there before the court, but this did not bother Gallio.

Paul Returns to Antioch

¹⁸Paul stayed with the brothers for many more days. Then he left with Priscilla and Aquila and sailed for Syria. At Cenchrea, Paul cut off his hair because he had made a vow [to God]. ¹⁹Then they went to Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. While Paul was there, he went into the synagogue and talked with the Jews. ²⁰When they asked him to stay with them longer, he refused. ²¹He left them but he said, "I will come back to you again if God wants me to." And so he sailed away from Ephesus.

²²Paul landed at Caesarea. Then he went up [to Jerusalem] and gave greetings to the church. After that, Paul went down to Antioch. ²³He stayed there for a while and then left and went through the countries of Galatia and Phrygia. He traveled from town to town in these countries, giving strength to all the followers.

Apollos in Ephesus and Achaia (Corinth)

²⁴A Jew named Apollos came to Ephesus. He was born in the city of Alexandria. He was an educated man who knew the Scriptures well. ²⁵He had been taught about the Lord. He spoke with enthusiasm and taught the truth about Jesus. But the only baptism that Apollos knew about was the baptism that John taught. ²⁶Apollos began to speak very boldly in the synagogue, and Priscilla and Aquila heard him. So they took him to their home and helped him better understand the way of God. ²⁷Now Apollos wanted to go to the country of Achaia, so the brothers helped him. They wrote a letter to the followers in Achaia, asking them to accept him. These followers in Achaia had believed in Jesus because of God's grace. When Apollos went there, he

helped them very much. ²⁸He argued very strongly with the Jews before all the people. He clearly proved that the Jews were wrong. Using the Scriptures, he proved that Jesus is the Christ.^a

Paul in Ephesus

19 While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul was visiting some places on the way to Ephesus. There he found some followers. ²Paul asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

They said, "We have never even heard of a Holy Spirit!"

³So he asked, "What kind of baptism did you have?"

They said, "It was the baptism that John taught."

⁴Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of changed hearts and lives. He told people to believe in the One who would come after him. That One is Jesus."

⁵When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶Then Paul laid his hands on them and the Holy Spirit came upon them. They began speaking different languages and prophesying. ⁷There were about 12 men in this group.

⁸Paul went into the synagogue and spoke out boldly for three months. He talked with the Jews and persuaded them concerning the kingdom of God. ⁹But some of the Jews became stubborn and refused to believe. They said evil things about the Way of Jesus to all the people. So Paul left them and took the followers with him. He went to the school of Tyrannus. There Paul talked with people every day ¹⁰for two years. Because of his work, every Jew and Greek in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.

The Sons of Sceva

¹¹God used Paul to do very special miracles. ¹²Some people took handkerchiefs and clothes that Paul had used and put them on the sick. When they did this, the sick were healed and evil spirits left them.

¹³⁻¹⁴But some Jews also were traveling around and making evil spirits go out of people. The seven sons of Sceva were doing this. (Sceva was a leading Jewish priest.) These Jews tried to

^{28a} Or *Messiah*.

use the name of the Lord Jesus to force the evil spirits out. They would say, "By the same Jesus that Paul preaches, I order you to come out!"

¹⁵But one time an evil spirit said to these Jews, "I know Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?"

¹⁶Then the man, who had the evil spirit in him, jumped on these Jews. He was much stronger than all of them. He beat them and tore their clothes off, so they ran away from the house. ¹⁷All the people in Ephesus, Jews and Greeks, learned about this. They were filled with fear, and great honor was given to the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁸Many of the believers began to confess openly and tell the evil deeds they had done. ¹⁹Some who had used magic brought their magic books and burned them before everyone. Those books were worth about 50,000 silver coins.

²⁰So in a powerful way the word of the Lord kept spreading and growing.

Paul Plans a Trip

²¹After these things had happened, Paul made plans to go through the provinces of Macedonia and Achaia, and then on to Jerusalem. He said, "After I have been to Jerusalem, I must also visit Rome." ²²Paul sent Timothy and Erastus, two of his helpers, ahead to Macedonia. He himself stayed in Asia for a while.

Trouble in Ephesus

²³But during that time, there was some serious trouble in Ephesus about the Way of Jesus. ²⁴There was a man named Demetrius, who worked with silver. He made little silver models that looked like the temple of the goddess Artemis. The men who did this work made much money. ²⁵Demetrius had a meeting with these men and some others who did the same kind of work. He told them, "Men, you know that we make a lot of money from our business. ²⁶But look at what this man Paul is doing! He has convinced and turned away many people in Ephesus and in almost all of Asia! He says the gods that men make are not real. ²⁷There is a danger that our business will lose its good name. But there is also another danger: People will be-

gin to think that the temple of the great goddess Artemis is not important! Her greatness will be destroyed. And Artemis is the goddess that everyone in Asia and the whole world worships."

²⁸When the men heard this, they became very angry. They shouted, "Great is Artemis of Ephesus!" ²⁹The whole city became confused. The people grabbed Gaius and Aristarchus. (These two men were from Macedonia and were traveling with Paul.) Then all the people ran to the theater. ³⁰Paul wanted to go in and talk to the crowd, but the followers did not let him. ³¹Also, some leaders of Asia were friends of Paul. They sent him a message, begging him not to go into the theater. ³²Some people were shouting one thing and some were shouting another. The meeting was completely confused. Most of the people did not know why they had come together. ³³The Jews put a man named Alexander in front of the people. Some of them had told him what to do. Alexander waved his hand because he wanted to explain things to the people. ³⁴But when they saw that Alexander was a Jew, they all began shouting the same thing. They continued shouting for two hours: "Great is Artemis of Ephesus!"

³⁵Then the city clerk made the crowd be quiet. He said, "Men of Ephesus, everyone knows that Ephesus is the city that keeps the temple of the great goddess Artemis. All people know that we also keep her holy stone. ³⁶No one can say that this is not true. So you should be quiet. You must stop and think before you do anything. ³⁷You brought these men here, but they have not said anything evil against our goddess. They have not stolen anything from her temple. ³⁸We have courts of law and there are judges. Do Demetrius and the men who work with him have a charge against anyone? They should go to the courts! That is where they can accuse each other! ³⁹Is there something else you want to talk about? It can be decided at the regular town meeting of the people. ⁴⁰We are in danger of being accused with rioting because of what has happened today. And we could not explain this because there is no real reason for this meeting." ⁴¹After the city clerk said these things, he told the people to go home.

Paul Goes to Macedonia and Greece

20 When the trouble stopped, Paul sent for the followers to come to him. He encouraged them and then told them good-bye. Paul left and went to the province of Macedonia. ²He said many things to strengthen the followers in the different places on his way through Macedonia. Then he went to Greece [Achaia]. ³He stayed there three months. He was ready to sail for Syria, but some Jews were planning something against him. So Paul decided to go back through Macedonia to Syria. ⁴Some men went with him. They were: Sopater, the son of Pyrrhus, from the city of Berea; Aristarchus and Secundus, from the city of Thessalonica; Gaius, from Derbe; and Timothy; and Tychicus and Trophimus, two men from Asia. ⁵These men went first, ahead of Paul and waited for us at Troas. ⁶We sailed from Philippi after the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and we met them in Troas five days later. We stayed there seven days.

Paul's Last Visit to Troas

⁷On the first day of the week, we all met together to break bread. Paul spoke to the group. Because he was planning to leave the next day, he kept on talking till midnight. ⁸We were all together in a room upstairs, and there were many lamps in the room. ⁹A young man named Eutychus was sitting in the window. As Paul continued talking, Eutychus was falling into a deep sleep. Finally, he went sound asleep and fell to the ground from the third floor. When they picked him up, he was dead. ¹⁰Paul went down to Eutychus, knelt, and put his arms around him. He said, "Don't worry. He is alive now." ¹¹Then Paul went upstairs again, broke bread, and ate. He spoke to them a long time, until it was early morning. Then he left. ¹²They took the young man home alive and were greatly comforted.

The Trip from Troas to Miletus

¹³We went ahead of Paul to the ship and sailed for Assos. Paul planned to join us on the ship there because he wanted to go to Assos by land. ¹⁴When he met us at Assos, we took him aboard and went to Mitylene. ¹⁵The next day, we sailed from Mitylene and came to a place near Chios. The next day, we sailed to Samos. A day later, we reached Miletus. ¹⁶Paul had al-

ready decided not to stop at Ephesus because he did not want to stay too long in Asia. He was hurrying to be in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost if that was possible.

Paul Speaks to the Elders from Ephesus

¹⁷Now from Miletus Paul sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. ¹⁸When they came to him, he said, "You know about my life from the first day I came to Asia. You know the way I lived all the time I was with you. ¹⁹The Jews plotted against me, and this troubled me very much. But you know that I always served the Lord. I never thought of myself first, and I often cried. ²⁰You know I preached to you, and I did not hold back anything that would help you. You know that I taught you in public and in your homes. ²¹I warned both Jews and Greeks to change their lives and turn to God. And I told them all to believe in our Lord Jesus. ²²But now I must obey the Holy Spirit and go to Jerusalem. I don't know what will happen to me there. ²³I know only that in every city the Holy Spirit tells me that troubles and even jail wait for me. ²⁴But I don't care about my own life. The most important thing is that I complete my mission. I want to finish the work that the Lord Jesus gave me—to tell people the Good News about God's grace.

²⁵"And now, I know that none of you will ever see me again. All the time I was with you, I was preaching the kingdom of God. ²⁶So today I can tell you one thing that I am sure of: If any of you should be lost, I am not responsible. ²⁷This is because I have told you everything God wants you to know. ²⁸Be careful for yourselves and for all the people God has given you. The Holy Spirit gave you the work of caring for this flock. You must be like shepherds to the church of God.^a This is the church that God bought with his own blood.^b ²⁹I know that after I leave, some men will come like wild wolves and try to destroy the flock. ³⁰Also, men from your own group will rise up and twist the truth. They will lead away followers after them. ³¹So be careful! Always remember this: For three years I never stopped warning each of you. I taught you night and day and often cried over you.

³²"Now I am putting you in the care of God and the message

^{28a} Some Greek copies say of the Lord. ^{28b} Or the blood of his own Son.

about his grace. That message is able to give you strength, and it will give you the blessings that God has for all his holy people.

³³When I was with you, I never wanted anyone's money or fine clothes. ³⁴You know that I always worked to take care of my own needs and the needs of those who were with me. ³⁵I showed you in all things that you should work as I did and help the weak. I taught you to remember the words of Jesus. He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

³⁶When Paul had said this, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. ³⁷⁻³⁸And they all cried because Paul had said that they would never see him again. They put their arms around him and kissed him. Then they went with him to the ship.

Paul Goes to Jerusalem

21 After we left them, we sailed straight to Cos. The next day, we reached Rhodes and from Rhodes we went to Patara. ²There we found a ship that was going to Phoenicia. We went aboard and sailed away. ³We could see the island of Cyprus to the north, but we sailed on to Syria. We stopped at Tyre because the ship needed to unload its cargo there. ⁴We found some followers in Tyre, and we stayed with them for seven days. Through the Holy Spirit they warned Paul not to go to Jerusalem. ⁵When we finished our visit, we left and continued our trip. All the followers, even the women and children, came outside the city with us. We all knelt down on the beach and prayed. ⁶Then we said good-bye and got on the ship. The followers went back home.

⁷We continued our trip from Tyre and arrived at Ptolemais. We greeted the brothers there and stayed with them for a day.

⁸We left Ptolemais and arrived in Caesarea. There we went into the home of Philip and stayed with him. Philip, who was one of the seven helpers, had the work of telling the Good News.

⁹He had four unmarried daughters who had the gift of prophesying. ¹⁰After we had been there for some time, a prophet named Agabus arrived from Judea. ¹¹He came to us and borrowed Paul's belt. Then he used the belt to tie his own hands and feet. He said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'This is how the Jews in Jerusalem will tie up the man who wears this belt. Then they will give him to the non-Jewish people.'"

¹²We all heard these words. So we and the people there begged Paul not to go to Jerusalem. ¹³But he said, "Why are you crying and making me so sad? I am ready to be tied up in Jerusalem. And I am ready to die for the name of the Lord Jesus!"

¹⁴We could not persuade him to stay away from Jerusalem. So we stopped begging him and said, "We pray that what the Lord wants will be done."

¹⁵After this, we got ready and started on our way to Jerusalem. ¹⁶Some of the followers from Caesarea went with us. They took us to the home of Mnason, a man from Cyprus. Mnason was one of the first followers. They took us to his home so that we could stay with him.

Paul Visits James

¹⁷In Jerusalem the brothers were glad to see us. ¹⁸The next day, Paul went with us to visit James. All the elders were there, too. ¹⁹Paul greeted them and told them everything that God had done among the non-Jewish people through him. ²⁰When they heard this, they praised God. Then they said to Paul, "Brother, you can see that many thousands of Jews have become believers. But they think it is very important to obey the law of Moses. ²¹These Jews have heard about your teaching. They heard that you tell the Jews who live among non-Jews to leave the law of Moses. They heard that you tell them not to circumcise their children and not to obey Jewish customs. ²²What should we do? The Jewish believers here will learn that you have come. ²³So we will tell you what to do: Four of our men have made a vow to God. ²⁴Take these men with you and share in their cleansing ceremony. Pay their expenses. Then they can shave their heads. Do this and it will prove to everyone that what they have heard about you is not true. They will see that you follow the law of Moses in your own life. ²⁵We have already sent a letter to the non-Jewish believers, saying:

'Do not eat food that has been offered to idols.

Do not taste blood.

Do not eat animals that have been strangled.

Do not be guilty of sexual sin.'"

²⁶The next day Paul took the four men with him and shared with them in the cleansing ceremony. Then he went to the

temple. Paul announced the time when the days of the cleansing ceremony would be finished. On the last day an offering would be given for each of the men.

²⁷When the seven days were almost over, some Jews from Asia saw Paul at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd, and they grabbed Paul. ²⁸They shouted, "Men of Israel, help us! This is the man who goes everywhere teaching things that are against the law of Moses, against our people, and against this place [the temple]. And now he has brought some Greek men into the temple. He has made this holy place unclean!"

²⁹(The Jews said this because they had seen Trophimus with Paul in Jerusalem. Trophimus was a man from Ephesus. The Jews thought that Paul had brought him into the temple.)

³⁰All the people in Jerusalem became very upset. They ran and took Paul and dragged him out of the temple. The temple doors were closed immediately. ³¹The people were about to kill Paul. Now the commander of the Roman army in Jerusalem learned that there was trouble in the whole city. ³²Immediately he ran to the place where the crowd was gathered. He brought officers and soldiers with him. When the people saw them, they stopped beating Paul. ³³The commander went to Paul and arrested him. He told his soldiers to tie up Paul with two chains. Then he asked, "Who is this man? What has he done wrong?" ³⁴Some in the crowd were yelling one thing, and some were yelling another. Because of all this confusion, the commander could not learn what had happened. So he ordered the soldiers to take Paul to the army building. ³⁵⁻³⁶The whole mob was following them. When the soldiers came to the steps, they had to carry Paul. They did this because the people were ready to hurt him. They were shouting, "Kill him!"

³⁷As the soldiers were about to take Paul into the army building, he spoke to the commander, "May I say something to you?"

The commander said, "Do you speak Greek? ³⁸Aren't you the Egyptian who started a revolt and led 4,000 killers out to the desert not long ago?"

³⁹Paul said, "No, I am a Jew from Tarsus in the country of Cilicia. I am a citizen of that important city. Please, let me speak to the people."

⁴⁰The commander gave permission, so Paul stood on the

steps. He waved with his hand so that the people would be quiet. When there was silence, Paul spoke to them in the Jewish language.

Paul Speaks to the People

22 Paul said, "Brothers and fathers, listen to me! I will make my defense to you." ²When the Jews heard him speaking the Jewish language, they became very quiet. Paul said, ³"I am a Jew. I was born in Tarsus of Cilicia. I grew up in this city [Jerusalem]. I was a student of Gamaliel. He carefully taught me everything about the law of our fathers. I was very serious about serving God, just as are all of you here today. ⁴I persecuted the people who followed the Way. Some of them were even killed. I arrested men and women and put them in jail. ⁵The high priest and the whole council of older Jewish leaders can tell you that this is true. These leaders gave me letters to the Jewish brothers in Damascus. So I was going there to arrest these people [Christians] and bring them back to Jerusalem to be punished."

Paul Tells About His Conversion

⁶"But something happened to me on my way to Damascus. It was about noon when I came near Damascus. Suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed all around me. ⁷I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying: 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' ⁸I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' The voice said, 'I am Jesus from Nazareth. I am the One you are persecuting.' ⁹The men who were with me did not understand the voice, but they saw the light. ¹⁰I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' The Lord answered, 'Get up and go to Damascus. There you will be told about everything I have planned for you to do.' ¹¹I could not see, because the bright light had made me blind. So the men led me into Damascus.

¹²"There a man named Ananias came to me. He was a religious man; he obeyed the law of Moses. All the Jews who lived there respected him. ¹³Ananias came to me, stood by me, and said, 'Brother Saul, see again!' Immediately I was able to see him. ¹⁴Ananias told me, 'The God of our fathers chose you long

ago to know his plan. He chose you to see the Righteous One [Jesus] and to hear words from him. ¹⁵You will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard. ¹⁶Now, why wait any longer? Get up, be baptized, and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'

¹⁷"Later, I returned to Jerusalem. As I was praying in the temple, I saw a vision. ¹⁸I saw the Lord saying to me: 'Hurry! Leave Jerusalem now! The people here will not accept the truth about me.' ¹⁹But I said, 'Lord, they know that in every synagogue I put the believers in jail and beat them. ²⁰They also know that I was there when Stephen, your witness,^a was killed. I stood there and agreed that they should kill him. I even held the coats of the men who were killing him!' ²¹But the Lord said to me, 'Leave now. I will send you far away to the non-Jewish people.'"

²²The crowd listened to Paul until he said this. Then they began shouting, "Kill him! Get him out of the world! A man like this should not be allowed to live!" ²³They shouted and threw off their coats. They threw dust into the air. ²⁴Then the commander ordered the soldiers to take Paul into the army building and beat him. The commander wanted to make Paul tell why the people were shouting against him like this. ²⁵So the soldiers were tying him up, preparing to beat him. But Paul said to an officer there, "Do you have the right to beat a Roman citizen who has not been proved guilty?"

²⁶When the officer heard this, he went to the commander and told him about it. The officer said, "Do you know what you are doing? This man is a Roman citizen!"

²⁷The commander came to Paul and said, "Tell me, are you really a Roman citizen?"

He answered, "Yes."

²⁸The commander said, "I paid a lot of money to become a Roman citizen."

But Paul said, "I was born a citizen."

²⁹The men who were preparing to question Paul moved away from him immediately. The commander was frightened because he had already tied Paul up, and Paul was a Roman citizen.

^{20a} Or *martyr*.

Paul Speaks to the Jewish Leaders

³⁰The next day the commander decided to learn why the Jews were accusing Paul. So he ordered the leading priests and the Jewish council to meet. The commander took Paul's chains off, brought him out and stood him before their meeting.

23 Paul looked at the Jewish council and said, "Brothers, I have lived my life in a good way before God up to this day." ²Ananias, the high priest, heard this and told the men who were standing near Paul to hit him on his mouth. ³Paul said to Ananias, "God will hit you too! You are like a wall that has been painted white! You sit there and judge me, using the law. But you are telling them to hit me, and that is against the law."

⁴The men standing near Paul said to him, "You cannot talk like that to God's high priest! You are insulting him!"

⁵Paul said, "Brothers, I did not know this man was the high priest. It is written in the Scriptures, 'You must not speak evil of a ruler of your people.'"

⁶Some of the men in the meeting were Sadducees, and others were Pharisees. So Paul shouted to them, "My brothers, I am a Pharisee and my father was a Pharisee! I am on trial here because I hope that people will rise from death!"

⁷When Paul said this, there was an argument between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The group was divided. ⁸(The Sadducees believe that after people die, they cannot live again. The Sadducees also teach that there are no angels or spirits. But the Pharisees believe in them all.) ⁹So there was a great uproar. Some of the teachers of the law, who were Pharisees, stood up and argued forcefully, "We find nothing wrong with this man! Maybe an angel or a spirit did speak to him."

¹⁰The argument was beginning to turn into a fight. The commander was afraid that the Jews would tear Paul to pieces. So the commander told the soldiers to go down and take Paul away and put him in the army building.

¹¹The next night the Lord came and stood by Paul. He said, "Be brave! You have told people in Jerusalem about me. You must do the same in Rome also."

¹²In the morning some of the Jews made a plan to kill Paul. They made a vow that they would not eat or drink anything until they had killed him. ¹³There were more than 40 Jews who made this plan. ¹⁴They went and talked to the leading priests and the older Jewish leaders. They said, "We have made a serious vow that we will not eat or drink until we have killed Paul! ¹⁵So this is what we want you to do: Send a message to the commander to bring Paul out to you, pretending you want more correct information about him. We will be waiting to kill him while he is on the way here."

¹⁶But Paul's nephew heard about this plan. He went to the army building and told Paul about it. ¹⁷Then Paul called one of the officers and said, "Take this young man to the commander. He has a message for him." ¹⁸So the officer brought Paul's nephew to the commander. The officer said, "The prisoner, Paul, asked me to bring this young man to you. He wants to tell you something."

¹⁹The commander led the young man to a place where they could be alone. The commander asked, "What do you want to tell me?"

²⁰The young man said, "The Jews have decided to ask you to bring Paul down to their council meeting tomorrow. They want you to think that they want more information about him. ²¹But don't believe them! There are more than 40 men who are hiding and waiting to kill Paul. They have all made a vow not to eat or drink until they have killed him! Now they are waiting for you to say yes."

²²The commander sent the young man away. He said to him, "Don't tell anyone that you have told me about their plan."

Paul Is Sent to Caesarea

²³Then the commander called two officers. He said to them, "I need some men to go to Caesarea. Get 200 soldiers ready. Also, get 70 horsemen and 200 men with spears. Be ready to leave at nine o'clock tonight. ²⁴Get some horses for Paul to ride. He must be taken to Governor Felix safely." ²⁵And he wrote a letter which said:

²⁶From Claudius Lysias
To the Most Excellent Governor Felix:

Greetings.

²⁷The Jews had taken this man [Paul], and they planned to kill him. But I learned that he is a Roman citizen, so I went with my soldiers and saved him.

²⁸I wanted to know why they were accusing him. So I brought him before their council meeting. ²⁹I learned that the Jews said Paul did some things that were wrong. But these charges were about their own laws, and no charge was worthy of jail or death. ³⁰I was told that some of the Jews were planning to kill Paul. So I sent him to you at once. I also told those Jews to tell you what they have against him.

³¹So the soldiers did what they were told. They took Paul and brought him to the city of Antipatris that night. ³²The next day the horsemen went with Paul to Caesarea, but the other soldiers went back to the army building in Jerusalem. ³³The horsemen came to Caesarea and gave the letter to the governor [Felix]. Then they turned Paul over to him. ³⁴The governor read the letter and asked Paul, "What province are you from?" He learned that Paul was from Cilicia. ³⁵He said, "I will hear your case when those who are against you come here too." Then the governor gave orders for Paul to be kept under guard in the palace. (This building had been built by Herod.)

The Jews Accuse Paul

24 Five days later Ananias, the high priest, went to the city of Caesarea. With him were some of the older Jewish leaders and a lawyer named Tertullus. They had come to make charges against Paul before the governor. ²Paul was called into the meeting, and Tertullus began to accuse him, saying: "Most Excellent Felix! Our people enjoy much peace because of you, and many wrong things in our country are being made right through your wise help. ³We accept these things always and in every place. And we are thankful for them. ⁴But I do not want to take any more of your time. I beg you to be kind and listen to our few words. ⁵This man [Paul] is a troublemaker. He makes trouble among the Jews everywhere in the world. He is a leader of the Nazarene group. ⁶Also, he was trying to make the temple

unclean, but we stopped him.”⁸ You can decide if all these things are true. Ask him some questions yourself.”⁹ The other Jews agreed and said that all of this was true.

¹⁰The governor made a sign for Paul to speak. So Paul said, “Governor Felix, I know that you have been a judge over this nation for a long time. So I am happy to defend myself before you. ¹¹I went to worship in Jerusalem only 12 days ago. You can learn for yourself that this is true. ¹²Those who are accusing me did not find me arguing with anyone in the temple. I was not stirring up the people, and I was not making trouble in the temple or in the synagogues or in the city. ¹³They cannot prove the charges they are making against me now. ¹⁴But I will tell you this: I worship the God of our fathers as a follower of the Way. The Jews say that the Way is not the right way. But I believe everything that is taught in the law of Moses and that is written in the books of the Prophets. ¹⁵I have the same hope in God that they have—the hope that all people, good and bad, will be raised from death. ¹⁶This is why I always try to do what I believe is right before God and men.

¹⁷“I was away from Jerusalem for several years. I went back there to bring money to my people and to offer sacrifices. ¹⁸I was doing this when they found me in the temple. I had finished the cleansing ceremony. I had not made any trouble; no people were gathering around me. ¹⁹But some Jews from Asia were there. They should be here, standing before you. If I have really done anything wrong, they are the ones who should accuse me. ²⁰Or ask these Jews here if they found any wrong in me when I stood before the Jewish council in Jerusalem. ²¹But I did say one thing when I stood before them: ‘You are judging me today because I believe that people will rise from death!’”

²²Felix already understood much about the Way. He stopped the trial and said, “When commander Lysias comes here, I will decide about your case.” ²³Felix told the officer to keep Paul guarded. But he told the officer to give Paul some freedom and to let his friends bring what he needed.

^{6a} Some Greek copies add 6b-8a: *And we wanted to judge him by our own law. ⁷ But the officer Lysias came and used much force to take him from us. ⁸ And Lysias commanded his people to come to you to accuse us.*

Paul Speaks to Felix and His Wife

²⁴After some days Felix came with his wife, Drusilla, who was a Jewess. He asked for Paul to be brought to him. He listened to Paul talk about believing in Christ Jesus. ²⁵But Felix became afraid when Paul spoke about right living, self-control, and the judgment that will come in the future. He said, "Go away now. When I have more time, I will send for you." ²⁶At the same time Felix hoped that Paul would give him some money. So he sent for Paul often and talked with him.

²⁷But after two years, Porcius Festus became governor. Felix was no longer governor, but he had left Paul in prison to please the Jews.

Paul Asks to See Caesar

25 Three days after Festus became governor, he went from Caesarea to Jerusalem. ²There the leading priests and the important Jewish leaders made charges against Paul before Festus. ³They asked Festus to do something for them; they wanted him to send Paul back to Jerusalem. (They had a plan to kill Paul on the way.) ⁴But Festus answered, "No! Paul will be kept in Caesarea. I will return there soon myself. ⁵Some of your leaders should go with me. They can accuse the man [Paul] there in Caesarea, if he has really done something wrong."

⁶Festus stayed in Jerusalem another eight or ten days. Then he went back to Caesarea. The next day he told the soldiers to bring Paul before him. Festus was seated on the judgment seat ⁷when Paul came in. The Jews who had come from Jerusalem stood around him. They started making serious charges against Paul, but they could not prove any of them. ⁸This is what Paul said to defend himself: "I have done nothing wrong against the Jewish law, against the temple, or against Caesar!"

⁹But Festus wanted to please the Jews. So he asked Paul, "Do you want to go to Jerusalem? Do you want me to judge you there on these charges?"

¹⁰Paul said, "I am standing at Caesar's judgment seat now. This is where I should be judged! I have done nothing wrong to the Jews; you know this is true. ¹¹If I have done something wrong and the law says I must die, I do not ask to be saved

from death. But if these charges are not true, then no one can give me to them. No! I want Caesar to hear my case!"

¹²Festus talked about this with his advisers. Then he said, "You have asked to see Caesar; so you will go to Caesar!"

Paul Before Herod Agrippa

¹³A few days later King Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to visit Festus. ¹⁴They stayed there for some time, and Festus told the king about Paul's case. Festus said, "There is a man that Felix left in prison. ¹⁵When I went to Jerusalem, the leading priests and the older Jewish leaders there made charges against him. They wanted me to sentence him to death. ¹⁶But I answered, 'When a man is accused of a crime, Romans do not hand him over just to please someone. The man must be allowed to face his accusers and defend himself against their charges.' ¹⁷So these Jews came here to Caesarea for the trial, and I did not waste time. The next day I sat on the judgment seat and commanded that the man [Paul] be brought in. ¹⁸The Jews stood up and accused him. But they did not accuse him of any serious crime as I thought they would. ¹⁹The things they said were about their own religion and about a man named Jesus. Jesus died, but Paul said that he is still alive. ²⁰I did not know much about these things; so I did not ask questions. But I asked Paul, 'Do you want to go to Jerusalem and be judged there?' ²¹But he asked to be kept in Caesarea. He wants a decision from the Emperor. So I ordered that Paul be held until I could send him to Caesar [in Rome]."

²²Agrippa said to Festus, "I would like to hear this man, too."

Festus said, "Tomorrow you will hear him!"

²³The next day Agrippa and Bernice appeared. They dressed and acted like very important people. Agrippa and Bernice, the army leaders, and the important men of Caesarea went into the judgment room. Then Festus ordered the soldiers to bring Paul in. ²⁴Festus said, "King Agrippa and all who are gathered here with us, you see this man. All the Jewish people, here and in Jerusalem, have complained to me about him. They shout that he should not live any longer. ²⁵When I judged him, I could find nothing wrong. I found no reason to order his death. But

he asked to be judged by Caesar and so I decided to send him.
²⁶But I have nothing definite to write the emperor about him. So I have brought him before all of you—especially you, King Agrippa. I hope that you can question him and give me something to write. ²⁷I think it is foolish to send a prisoner without telling what the charges are against him.”

Paul Before King Agrippa

26 Agrippa said to Paul, “You may now speak to defend yourself.”

Then Paul raised his hand and began to speak. ²He said, “King Agrippa, I will answer all the charges that the Jews make against me. I think it is a blessing that I can stand here before you today. ³I am very happy to talk to you, because you know so much about all the Jewish customs and the things that the Jews argue about. Please listen to me patiently.

⁴“All the Jews know about my whole life. They know the way I lived from the beginning in my own country and later in Jerusalem. ⁵They have known me for a long time. If they want to, they can tell you that I was a good Pharisee. And the Pharisees obey the laws of the Jewish religion more carefully than any other group of Jewish people. ⁶Now I am on trial because I hope for the promise that God made to our fathers. ⁷This is the promise that the 12 tribes of our people hope to receive. For this hope the Jews serve God day and night. O king, the Jews have accused me because I hope for this same promise! ⁸Why do any of you think it is impossible for God to raise people from death?

⁹“I too thought I ought to do many things against the name of Jesus from Nazareth. ¹⁰And in Jerusalem I did many things against God’s holy people. The leading priests gave me the power to put many of them in jail. When they were being killed, I agreed that it was a good thing. ¹¹In every synagogue, I often punished them. I tried to make them say evil things against Jesus. I was so angry against them that I even went to other cities to find them and persecute them.”

Paul Tells About Seeing Jesus

¹²“One time the leading priests gave me permission and the power to go to Damascus. ¹³On the way there, at noon, I saw a

light from heaven that was brighter than the sun. It flashed all around me and the men who were traveling with me. ¹⁴We all fell to the ground. Then I heard a voice speaking to me in the Jewish language. The voice said, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? You are only hurting yourself by fighting me.' ¹⁵I said, 'Who are you, Lord?' The Lord said, 'I am Jesus. I am the One you are persecuting. ¹⁶Stand up! I have chosen you to be my servant. You will be my witness—you will tell others what you have seen and what I will show you. This is why I have come to you today. ¹⁷I will not let your own people hurt you, and I will keep you safe from the non-Jewish people too. These are the people I am sending you to. ¹⁸I send you to open their eyes that they may turn away from darkness to the light. I send you so that they may turn away from the power of Satan and turn to God. Then their sins can be forgiven and they can have a place with those who have been made holy by believing in me.'"

Paul Tells About His Work

¹⁹Paul continued speaking: "King Agrippa, after I had this vision from heaven, I obeyed it. ²⁰I began telling people that they should change their hearts and lives and turn to God. I told them to do things to show that they really had changed. I told this first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and in every part of Judea, and also to the non-Jewish people. ²¹This is why the Jews took me and were trying to kill me in the temple. ²²But God helped me and is still helping me today. With God's help I am standing here today and telling all people what I have seen. But I am saying nothing new. I am saying what Moses and the prophets said would happen. ²³They said that the Christ^a would die and be the first to rise from death. They said that the Christ would bring light to the Jewish and non-Jewish people."

Paul Tries to Persuade Agrippa

²⁴While Paul was saying these things to defend himself, Festus said loudly, "Paul, you are out of your mind! Too much study has driven you crazy!"

^{23a} Or *Messiah*.

²⁵Paul said, "Most Excellent Festus, I am not crazy. My words are true. They are not the words of a foolish man. ²⁶King Agrippa knows about these things, and I can speak freely to him. I know that he has heard about all of these things because they did not happen off in a corner. ²⁷King Agrippa, do you believe what the prophets wrote? I know you believe!"

²⁸King Agrippa said to Paul, "Do you think you can persuade me to become a Christian in such a short time?"

²⁹Paul said, "It is not important if it is a short time or a long time. I pray to God that not only you but every person listening to me today would be saved and be like me—except for these chains I have!"

³⁰Then King Agrippa, Governor Festus, Bernice, and all the people sitting with them got up ³¹and left. They were talking to each other and saying, "There is no reason why this man should die or be put in jail." ³²And Agrippa said to Festus, "We could let this man go free, but he has asked Caesar to hear his case."

Paul Sails for Rome

27 It was decided that we would sail for Italy. An officer named Julius, who served in the emperor's army, guarded Paul and some other prisoners. ²We got on a ship and left. The ship was from Adramyttium and was about to sail to different ports in Asia. Aristarchus, a man from Thessalonica in Macedonia, went with us. ³The next day we came to Sidon. Julius was very good to Paul. He gave Paul freedom to go visit his friends, who took care of his needs. ⁴We left Sidon and sailed close to the island of Cyprus because the wind was blowing against us. ⁵We went across the sea by Cilicia and Pamphylia. Then we came to Myra, in Lycia. ⁶There the officer found a ship from Alexandria that was going to Italy. So he put us on it.

⁷We sailed slowly for many days. We had a hard time reaching Cnidus because the wind was blowing against us. We could not go any farther that way. So we sailed by the south side of the island of Crete near Salmone. ⁸We sailed along the coast, but the sailing was hard. Then we came to a place called Safe Harbors, near the city of Lasea.

⁹But we had lost much time. It was now dangerous to sail, because it was already after the Jewish day of fasting. So Paul warned them, ¹⁰"Men, I can see there will be a lot of trouble on this trip. The ship and the cargo in the ship will suffer much loss. Even our lives may be lost!" ¹¹But the captain and the owner of the ship did not agree with Paul. Instead of believing Paul, the officer believed what the captain and owner of the ship said. ¹²And that harbor [Safe Harbors] was not a good place for the ship to stay for the winter. So most of the men decided that the ship should leave. The men hoped we could go to Phoenix and stay there for the winter. (Phoenix is on the island of Crete. It had a harbor which faced southwest and northwest.)

The Storm

¹³Then a good wind began to blow from the south. The men on the ship thought, "This is the wind we wanted, and now we have it!" So they pulled up the anchor. We sailed very close to the island of Crete. ¹⁴But then a very strong wind named the "Northeaster" came from the island. ¹⁵This wind took the ship and carried it away. The ship could not sail against it. So we stopped trying and let the wind blow us. ¹⁶We went below a small island named Cauda. Then we were able to bring in the lifeboat, but it was very hard to do. ¹⁷After the men took the lifeboat in, they tied ropes around the ship to hold it together. The men were afraid that the ship would hit the sandbanks of Syrtis. So they lowered the sail and let the wind carry the ship. ¹⁸The next day the storm was blowing us so hard that the men threw out some of the cargo. ¹⁹A day later they threw out the ship's equipment. ²⁰For many days we could not see the sun or the stars and the storm was very bad. We lost all hope of staying alive.

²¹The men had gone without food for a long time. Then Paul stood up before them and said, "Men, I told you not to leave Crete. You should have listened to me. Then you would not have all this trouble and loss. ²²But now I tell you to cheer up. None of you will die, but the ship will be lost. ²³Last night an angel from God came to me. This is the God I worship, and I am his. ²⁴God's angel said, 'Paul, do not be afraid! You must

stand before Caesar. And God has given you this promise: He will save the lives of all those men sailing with you.’ ²⁵ So men, be cheerful! I trust in God that it will be just as he told me. ²⁶ But we will crash on an island.”

²⁷ On the fourteenth night we were floating around in the Adriatic Sea. The sailors thought we were close to land. ²⁸ They threw a rope into the water with a weight on the end of it. They found that the water was 120 feet deep. They went a little farther and threw the rope in again. It was 90 feet deep. ²⁹ The sailors were afraid that we would hit the rocks, so they threw four anchors into the water. Then they prayed for daylight to come. ³⁰ Some of the sailors wanted to leave the ship, and they lowered the lifeboat. These sailors wanted the other men to think that they were throwing more anchors from the front of the ship. ³¹ But Paul told the officer and the other soldiers, “If these men do not stay in the ship, your lives cannot be saved!” ³² So the soldiers cut the ropes and let the lifeboat fall into the water.

³³ Just before dawn Paul began persuading all the men to eat something. He said, “For the past 14 days you have been waiting and have not eaten anything. ³⁴ Now I beg you to eat something. You need it to stay alive. None of you will lose even one hair off your heads.” ³⁵ After he said this, Paul took some bread and thanked God for it before all of them. He broke off a piece and began eating. ³⁶ All the men felt better and started eating too. ³⁷ (There were 276 of us on the ship.) ³⁸ We ate all we wanted. Then we began making the ship lighter by throwing the grain into the sea.

The Ship Is Destroyed

³⁹ When daylight came the sailors saw land. They did not know what land it was, but they saw a bay with a beach. They wanted to sail the ship to the beach, if they could. ⁴⁰ So they cut the ropes to the anchors and left the anchors in the sea. At the same time, they untied the ropes that were holding the rudders. Then they raised the front sail into the wind and sailed toward the beach. ⁴¹ But the ship hit a sandbank. The front of the ship stuck there and could not move. Then the big waves began to break the back of the ship to pieces.

⁴² The soldiers decided to kill the prisoners so that none of

them could swim away and escape. ⁴³But the officer [Julius] wanted to let Paul live. So he did not allow the soldiers to kill the prisoners. Instead he ordered everyone who could swim to jump into the water and swim to land. ⁴⁴The rest used wooden boards or pieces of the ship. And this is how everyone made it safely to land.

Paul on the Island of Malta

28 When we were safe on land, we learned that the island was called Malta. ²It was raining and very cold, but the people who lived there were very good to us. They made us a fire and welcomed all of us. ³Paul gathered a pile of sticks for the fire. He was putting them on the fire when a poisonous snake came out because of the heat and bit him on the hand. ⁴The people living on the island saw the snake hanging from Paul's hand. They said to each other, "This man must be a murderer! He did not die in the sea, but Justice" does not want him to live." ⁵But Paul shook the snake off into the fire without being hurt. ⁶The people thought that Paul would swell up or fall down dead. They waited and watched him for a long time, but nothing bad happened to him. So they changed their minds about Paul. Now they said, "He is a god!"

⁷There were some fields around there owned by a very important man on the island. His name was Publius. He welcomed us into his home and was very good to us. We stayed in his house for three days. ⁸Publius' father was very sick with a fever and dysentery. But Paul went to him and prayed. Then he put his hands on the man and healed him. ⁹After this, all the other sick people on the island came to Paul, and he healed them, too. ¹⁰⁻¹¹The people on the island gave us many honors. We stayed there three months. When we were ready to leave, they gave us the things we needed.

Paul Goes to Rome

We got on a ship from Alexandria. The ship had stayed on the island during the winter. On the front of the ship was the sign of the twin gods. ¹²We stopped at Syracuse for three days and then left. ¹³From there we sailed to Rhegium. The next day

⁴⁹ The people thought there was a god named Justice who would punish bad people.

a wind began to blow from the southwest, so we were able to leave. A day later we came to Puteoli. ¹⁴We found some brothers there, and they asked us to stay with them for a week. Finally, we came to Rome. ¹⁵The believers in Rome heard about us and came out as far as the Market of Appius and the Three Inns to meet us. When Paul saw them, he was encouraged and thanked God.

Paul in Rome

¹⁶Then we arrived at Rome. There, Paul was allowed to live alone. But a soldier stayed with him to guard him.

¹⁷Three days later Paul sent for the Jewish leaders there. When they came together, he said, "Brothers, I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our fathers. But I was arrested in Jerusalem and given to the Romans. ¹⁸The Romans asked me many questions, but they could find no reason why I should be killed. They wanted to let me go free, ¹⁹but the Jews there did not want that. So I had to ask to have my trial before Caesar. But I have no charge to bring against my people [the Jews]. ²⁰That is why I wanted to see you and talk with you. I am bound with this chain because I believe in the hope of Israel."

²¹The Jews answered Paul, "We have received no letters from Judea about you. None of our Jewish brothers who have come from there [Judea] brought news about you or told us anything bad about you. ²²We want to hear your ideas. We know that people everywhere are speaking against this group [Christians]."

²³Paul and the Jews chose a day for a meeting. On that day many more of the Jews met with Paul where he was staying. Paul spoke to them all day long, explaining the kingdom of God to them. He tried to persuade them to believe these things about Jesus. He used the law of Moses and the writings of the prophets to do this. ²⁴Some of the Jews believed what Paul said, but others did not. ²⁵So they argued, and the Jews were ready to leave. But Paul said one more thing to them: "The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet. He said,

²⁶'Go to this people [the Jews] and tell them:

You will listen and you will hear,
but you will not understand!
You will look and you will see,
but you will not understand what you see.

²⁷ Yes, the minds of these people are now closed.
They have ears, but they don't listen.
And they refuse to see.

This has happened so that they will not
see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their minds.

This has happened so that they will not
turn to me to heal them.'

Isaiah 6:9-10

²⁸ "I want you Jews to know that God has also sent his salvation to the non-Jewish people. They will listen!" ^{29^a}

³⁰ Paul stayed two full years in his own rented house. He welcomed all who came and visited him. ³¹ He preached about the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ. He was very bold, and no one tried to stop him from speaking.

^{29^a} Some late Greek copies add verse 29: *After Paul said this, the Jews left. They were arguing very much with each other.*

Romans

1 From Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus. God called me to be an apostle and chose me to tell the Good News.

²God promised this Good News long ago through his prophets. That promise is written in the Holy Scriptures. ³⁻⁴The Good News is about God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. As a man, he was born from the family of David. But through the Spirit of holiness he was shown to be God's Son with great power by rising from death. ⁵Through Christ, God gave me the special work of an apostle. This was to lead people of all nations to believe and obey. I do this work for Christ. ⁶And you who are in Rome are also called to belong to Jesus Christ.

⁷This letter is to all of you in Rome whom God loves and has called to be his holy people.

May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ show you kindness and give you peace.

A Prayer of Thanks

⁸First I want to say that I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you. I thank God because people everywhere in the world are talking about your great faith. ⁹⁻¹⁰God knows that every time I pray I always mention you. God is the One I worship in my spirit by telling the Good News about his Son. I pray that I will be allowed to come to you, and this will happen if God wants it. ¹¹I want very much to see you, to give you some spiritual gift to make you strong. ¹²I mean that I want us to help each other with the faith that we have. Your faith will help me, and my faith will help you. ¹³Brothers, I want you to know that

I planned many times to come to you, but this has not been possible. I wanted to come so that I could help you grow spiritually. I wanted to help you as I have helped the other non-Jewish people.

¹⁴I must serve all people—Greeks and non-Greeks, the wise and the foolish. ¹⁵That is why I want so much to preach the Good News to you in Rome.

¹⁶I am proud of the Good News. It is the power God uses to save everyone who believes—to save the Jews first, and also to save the non-Jews. ¹⁷The Good News shows how God makes people right with himself. God's way of making people right in his sight begins and ends with faith.^a As the Scripture says, "The person who is made right with God by faith will live."^b

All People Have Done Wrong

¹⁸God's anger is shown from heaven against all the evil and wrong things that people do. By their own evil lives they hide the truth. ¹⁹God shows his anger because everything that may be known about God has been made clear. Yes, God has clearly shown them everything that may be known about him. ²⁰There are things about God that people cannot see—his eternal power and all the things that make him God. But since the beginning of the world those things have been easy to understand. They are made clear by the things that God has made. So people have no excuse. ²¹They knew God, but they did not give glory to God and they did not thank him. Their thinking became useless. Their foolish minds were filled with darkness. ²²They said they were wise, but they became fools. ²³They gave up the glory of God who lives forever. They traded that glory for the worship of idols made to look like earthly people and birds and animals and snakes.

²⁴People were full of sin, wanting only to do evil. So God let them go their sinful way. They became full of sexual sin, using their bodies wrongly with each other. ²⁵They traded the truth of God for a lie and worshiped and served things that were made by man. But they did not worship and serve the God who made those things and who should be praised forever. Amen.

²⁶Because people did those things, God gave them over to

^{17a} Or is from faith to faith. ^{17b} Habakkuk 2:4.

the shameful things they wanted to do. Women stopped having natural sex and started having sex with other women. ²⁷In the same way, men stopped having natural sex and began wanting each other. Men did shameful things with other men. And in their bodies they received the punishment for those wrongs.

²⁸People did not think it was important to have a true knowledge of God. So God gave them over to their own worthless thinking and to do the things they should not do. ²⁹They are filled with every kind of sin, evil, selfishness, and hatred. They are full of jealousy, murder, fighting, lying, and thinking the worst about each other. They gossip ³⁰and say evil things about each other. They hate God. They are rude and conceited and boast about themselves. They invent ways of doing evil. They do not obey their parents. ³¹They are foolish, they do not keep their promises, and they show no kindness or mercy to other people. ³²They know God's law says that those who live like this deserve to die. But they continue to do these evil things. And they also feel that those who do these things are doing right.

You People Also Are Sinful

2 So, you have no excuse for judging others. When you judge them and do the same things which they do, you judge yourself guilty. ²God judges those who do wrong things, and we know that God's judgment is right. ³You judge those who do wrong, but you do wrong yourselves. Do you think you will be able to escape the judgment of God? ⁴God has been very kind to you, and he has been patient with you. God has been waiting for you to change. But you think nothing of his kindness. Perhaps you do not understand that God is kind to you so that you will change your hearts and lives. ⁵But you are hard and stubborn and refuse to change. So you are making your own punishment greater and greater on the day God shows his anger. On that day all people will see God's right judgments. ⁶God will reward or punish every person for what he has done. ⁷Some people live for God's glory, for honor, and for life that has no end. They live for those things by always continuing to do good. God will give life forever to them. ⁸But other people are selfish and refuse to follow truth. They follow evil. God will

give them his punishment and anger. ⁹He will give trouble and suffering to everyone who does evil—to the Jews first, and also to the non-Jews. ¹⁰But God will give glory, honor, and peace to everyone who does good—to the Jews first and also to the non-Jews. ¹¹For God judges all people in the same way.

¹²People who have the law and those who have never heard of the law are all the same when they sin. Those who do not have the law and are sinners will be lost. And in the same way people who have the law and are sinners will be judged by the law. ¹³Hearing the law does not make people right with God. The law makes people right with God only if they obey what the law says. ¹⁴(The non-Jews do not have the law. But when they freely do things that the law commands, without even knowing the law, then they are the law for themselves. ¹⁵They show that in their hearts they know what is right and wrong, just as the law commands. They also show this by the way they feel about right and wrong. Sometimes their thoughts tell them they did wrong, and sometimes their thoughts tell them they did right.) ¹⁶All these things will happen on the day when God will judge the secret thoughts of people's hearts. The Good News that I preach says that God will judge everyone through Christ Jesus.

The Jews and the Law

¹⁷What about you? You call yourself a Jew. You trust in the law and boast that you are close to God. ¹⁸You know what God wants you to do. And you know what is important, because you have learned the law. ¹⁹You think you are a guide for the blind and a light for those who are in darkness. ²⁰You think you can show foolish people what is right and teach those who know nothing. You have the law; so you think you know everything and have all truth. ²¹You teach other people. So why do you not teach yourself? You tell others not to steal. But do you yourselves steal? ²²You say that others must not take part in adultery. But you yourselves are guilty of that sin. You hate idols, but you steal from temples. ²³You boast about God's law. But you bring shame to God by breaking his law. ²⁴It is written: "The non-Jews speak against God's name because of you Jews."

^{24a} Isaiah 52:5; Ezekiel 36:20.

²⁵If you follow the law, then your circumcision has meaning. But if you break the law, then it is as if you were never circumcised. ²⁶The non-Jews are not circumcised. But if they do what the law says, then it is as if they were circumcised. ²⁷You Jews have the written law and circumcision, but you break the law. So those who are not circumcised in their bodies, but still obey the law, will show that you are guilty.

²⁸A person is not a true Jew if he is only a Jew in his physical body. True circumcision is not only on the outside of the body.

²⁹A person is a true Jew only if he is a Jew inside. True circumcision is done in the heart by the Spirit, not by the written law. Such a person gets praise from God, not from other people.

3 So, do Jews have anything that other people do not have? Is there anything special about being circumcised? ²Yes, of course, there is in every way. The most important thing is this: God trusted the Jews with his teachings. ³It is true that some Jews were not faithful to God. But will that stop God from doing what he promised? ⁴No! God will continue to be true even when every person is false. As it is written:

“You will be proved right in your words,

and you will win when you are being judged.” *Psalms 51:4*

⁵When we do wrong, that shows more clearly that God is right. So can we say that God is wrong to punish us? (I am talking as men might talk.) ⁶No! If God could not punish us, then God could not judge the world.

⁷A person might say, “When I lie it really gives God glory, because my lie shows God’s truth. So why am I judged a sinner?” ⁸It would be the same to say, “We should do evil so that good will come.” Some people criticize us and say that we teach this. Those who say such things about us are wrong, and they should be condemned.

All People Are Guilty

⁹So are we Jews better than others? No! We have already said that Jews and non-Jews are the same. They are all guilty of sin. ¹⁰As it is written:

“There is no one without sin. None!

¹¹ There is no one who understands.

^{9a} Or worse.

There is no one who really wants to be with God.

¹² All have turned away,
and all have become worthless.

There is no one who does good. None!"

Psalm 14:1-3

¹³ "People's mouths are like open graves;
they use their tongues for telling lies."

Psalm 5:9

"The things they say are like the poison of
snakes;"

Psalm 140:3

¹⁴ "their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." *Psalm 10:7*

¹⁵ "They are always ready to hurt and kill;

¹⁶ everywhere they go they cause ruin and sadness.

¹⁷ They do not know the way of peace."

Isaiah 59:7-8

¹⁸ "They have no fear or respect for God."

Psalm 36:1

¹⁹ The law commands many things. We know that those commands are for those who are under the law. This stops all excuses and brings the whole world under God's judgment, ²⁰ because no one can be made right with God by following the law. The law only shows us our sin.

How God Makes People Right

²¹ But God has a way to make people right in his sight without the law. And God has now shown us that way, which was spoken of through the law and the prophets. ²² God makes people right with himself through their faith in Jesus Christ. This is true for all who believe in Christ, because all are the same. ²³ All people have sinned and are not good enough for God's glory. ²⁴ People are made right with God by his grace, which is a free gift. They are made right with God by being made free from sin through Jesus Christ. ²⁵ God gave Jesus as a way to forgive sin through faith.^a And all of this is because of the blood [death] of Jesus. This showed that God always does what is right and fair. God was right in the past when he was patient and did not punish people for their sins. ²⁶ And God gave Jesus to show today that God does what is right. God did this so that he could judge rightly and also make right in his sight any person who has faith in Jesus.

²⁷ So do we have a reason to boast about ourselves? No! And why not? It is the way of faith that stops all boasting, not the

^{25a} Or as the one who would turn aside his wrath, taking away sin.

way of following the law. ²⁸ A person is made right with God through faith, not through what he does to follow the law. ²⁹ Is God only the God of the Jews? Is he not also the God of the non-Jews? ³⁰ Of course he is, for there is only one God. He will make Jews right with him by their faith. And he will also make non-Jews right with him through their faith. ³¹ So do we destroy the law by following the way of faith? No! Faith causes us to be what the law truly wants.

The Example of Abraham

4 So what can we say about Abraham, the father of our people? What did he learn about faith? ² If Abraham was made right by the things he did, then he had a reason to boast. But he could not boast before God. ³ The Scripture says, "Abraham believed God, and God accepted his faith. That made Abraham right with God."^a

⁴ When a person works, his pay is not given to him as a gift. He earns the pay he gets. ⁵ But a person cannot do any work that will make him right with God. So he must trust in God. Then God accepts his faith, and that makes him right with God. God is the One who can make even those who are evil right in his sight. ⁶ David said the same thing. He said that a person is truly blessed when God does not look at what he has done but accepts him as good:

⁷ "People are truly blessed

when their wrongs are forgiven,

and when their sins are covered!

⁸ And when the Lord accepts him as if he were

without sin,

he is truly blessed!"

Psalms 32:1-2

⁹ Is this blessing only for those who are circumcised? Or is it also for those who are not circumcised? We have already said that God accepted Abraham's faith, and that faith made him right with God. ¹⁰ So how did this happen? Did God accept Abraham before or after he was circumcised? God accepted him before his circumcision. ¹¹ Abraham was circumcised later to show that God accepted him. His circumcision was proof that he was right with God through faith before he was circum-

^{3a} Genesis 15:6.

cised. So Abraham is the father of all those who believe but are not circumcised. He is the father of all believers who are accepted as being right with God. ¹²And Abraham is also the father of those who have been circumcised. But it is not their circumcision that makes him their father. He is their father only if they live following the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

God's Promise Received Through Faith

¹³Abraham and his descendants received the promise that they would get the whole world. But Abraham did not receive that promise through the law. He received it because he was right with God through his faith. ¹⁴If people could receive what God promised by following the law, then faith is worthless. And God's promise to Abraham is worthless, ¹⁵because the law can only bring God's anger. But if there is no law, then there is nothing to disobey.

¹⁶So people receive God's promise by having faith. This happens so that the promise can be a free gift. And if the promise is a free gift, then all of Abraham's children can have that promise. The promise is not only for those who live under the law. It is for anyone who lives with faith like Abraham. He is the father of us all. ¹⁷As it is written: "I have made you [Abraham] a father of many nations."^a This is true before God. Abraham believed in God—the God who gives life to the dead and decides that things will happen that have not yet happened.

¹⁸There was no hope, but Abraham believed God and continued hoping. And that is why he became the father of many nations. As God told him, "You will have many descendants."^b

¹⁹Abraham was almost 100 years old, much past the age for having children. Also, Sarah could not have children. Abraham thought about all this, but his faith in God did not become weak. ²⁰He never doubted that God would keep his promise. Abraham never stopped believing. He grew stronger in his faith and gave praise to God. ²¹Abraham felt sure that God was able to do what he promised. ²²So, "God accepted Abraham's faith. That made him right with God."^c ²³Those words ("God accepted Abraham's faith") were written not only for Abraham.

^{17a} Genesis 17:5. ^{18b} Genesis 15:5. ^{22c} Genesis 15:6.

²⁴They were written also for us. God will accept us also because we believe. We believe in the One who raised Jesus our Lord from death. ²⁵Jesus was given to die for our sins. And he was raised from death to make us right with God.

Right With God

5 We have been made right with God because of our faith. So we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ²Through our faith, Christ has brought us into that blessing of God's grace that we now enjoy. And we are happy because of the hope we have of sharing God's glory. ³We are also happy with the troubles we have because we know that these troubles produce endurance. ⁴And endurance produces character, and character produces hope. ⁵And this hope will never disappoint us—because God has poured out his love to fill our hearts. God gave us his love through the Holy Spirit, who is God's gift to us.

⁶Christ died for us while we were still weak. We were living against God, but at the right time, Christ died for us. ⁷Very few people will die to save the life of someone else—though perhaps for a good man someone might possibly die. ⁸But Christ died for us while we were still sinners. In this way God shows his great love for us.

⁹We have been made right with God by Christ's blood [death]. So through Christ we will surely be saved from God's anger. ¹⁰I mean that while we were God's enemies, God made friends with us through the death of his Son. Surely, now that we are God's friends, God will save us through his Son's life. ¹¹And not only that, but now we are also very happy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Jesus we are now God's friends again.

Adam and Christ

¹²Sin came into the world because of what one man [Adam] did. And with sin came death. And this is why all men must die—because all men sinned. ¹³Sin was in the world before the law. But God does not judge people guilty of sin if there is no law. ¹⁴But from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, everyone had to die. Adam died because he sinned by not obeying

God's command. But even those who did not sin in the same way had to die.

Adam was like the One [Christ] who was coming in the future. ¹⁵But God's free gift is not like Adam's sin. Many people died because of the sin of that one man [Adam]. But the grace that they received from God was much greater. Many people received God's gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ. ¹⁶After Adam sinned once, he was judged guilty. But the gift of God is different. God's free gift came after many sins, and the gift makes people right with God. ¹⁷One man sinned, and so death ruled all people because of that one man. But now some people accept God's full grace and the great gift of being made right in his sight. They will surely have life and rule through the one man, Jesus Christ.

¹⁸So one sin [of Adam] brought the punishment of death to all people. But in the same way, one good act [that Christ did] makes all people right with God. And that brings true life for all. ¹⁹One man [Adam] disobeyed God and many became sinners. But in the same way, one man [Christ] obeyed God and many will be made right. ²⁰The law came to make people have more sin. But when people had more sin, God gave them more of his grace. ²¹Sin once used death to rule us. But God gave people more of his grace so that grace could rule by making people right with him. And this brings life forever through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Dead to Sin but Alive in Christ

6 So do you think that we should continue sinning so that God will give us more and more grace? ²No! We died to our old sinful lives. So how can we continue living with sin? ³Did you forget that all of us became part of Christ when we were baptized? We shared his death in our baptism. ⁴So when we were baptized, we were buried with Christ and shared his death. We were buried with him so that we could live a new life, just as Christ was raised from death by the wonderful power of the Father.

⁵Christ died, and we have been joined with Christ by dying too. So we will also be joined with him by rising from death as he did. ⁶We know that our old life died with Christ on the

cross. This was so that our sinful selves would have no power over us, and we would not be slaves to sin. ⁷Anyone who has died is made free from sin's control.

⁸If we died with Christ, we know that we will also live with him. ⁹Christ was raised from death, and we know that he cannot die again. Death has no power over him now. ¹⁰Yes, when Christ died, he died to sin one time—enough for all time. He now has a new life, and his new life is with God. ¹¹In the same way, you should see yourselves as being dead to the power of sin and alive for God through Christ Jesus.

¹²So, do not let sin control you in your life here on earth. You must not be ruled by the things your sinful self makes you want to do. ¹³Do not offer the parts of your body to serve sin. Do not use your bodies as things to do evil with, but offer yourselves to God. Be like people who have died and now live. Offer the parts of your body to God to be used for doing good. ¹⁴Sin will not be your master, because you are not under law but under God's grace.

Slaves of Righteousness

¹⁵So what should we do? Should we sin because we are under grace and not under law? No! ¹⁶Surely you know that when you give yourselves like slaves to obey someone, then you are really slaves of that person. The person you obey is your master. You can follow sin, or obey God. Sin brings spiritual death, but obeying God makes you right with him. ¹⁷In the past you were slaves to sin—sin controlled you. But thank God, you fully obeyed the things that were taught to you. ¹⁸You were made free from sin, and now you are slaves to goodness. ¹⁹I use this example because this is hard for you to understand. In the past you offered the parts of your body to be slaves to sin and evil. You lived only for evil. In the same way now you must give yourselves to be slaves of goodness. Then you will live only for God.

²⁰In the past you were slaves to sin, and goodness did not control you. ²¹You did evil things and now you are ashamed of them. Did they help you? No. Those things only bring death. ²²But now you are free from sin and have become slaves of God. And this brings you a life that is only for God which gives life

forever. ²³When someone sins, he earns what sin pays—death. But God gives us a free gift—life forever in Christ Jesus our Lord.

An Example from Marriage

7 Brothers, all of you understand the law of Moses. So surely you know that the law rules over a person only while he is alive. ²For example, a woman must stay married to her husband as long as he is alive. But if her husband dies, then she is free from the law of marriage. ³But if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, the law says she is guilty of adultery. But if her husband dies, then the woman is free from the law of marriage. So if she marries another man after her husband dies, she is not guilty of adultery.

⁴In the same way, my brothers, your old selves died and you became free from the law through the body of Christ. Now you belong to someone else. You belong to the One who was raised from death. We belong to Christ so that we can be used in service to God. ⁵In the past, we were ruled by our sinful selves. The law made us want to do sinful things. And those sinful things we wanted to do controlled our bodies, so that the things we did were only bringing us spiritual death. ⁶In the past, the law held us like prisoners. But our old selves died and we were made free from the law. So now we serve God in a new way, not in the old way with written rules. Now we serve God in the new way, with the Spirit.

Our Fight Against Sin

⁷You might think that I am saying that sin and the law are the same thing. That is not true. But the law was the only way I could learn what sin meant. I would never have known what it means to want something wrong if the law had not said, “Do not want the wrong things.”^b ⁸And sin found a way to use that commandment and cause me to want every kind of wrong thing. So sin came to me because of that commandment. But without the law, sin has no power. ⁹I was alive without the law before I knew the law. But when the law’s commandment came to me, then sin began to live. ¹⁰And I died because of sin. The commandment was meant to bring life, but for me that com-

^{5a} Or *flesh*. ^{7b} Exodus 20:13, 15-17.

mandment brought death. ¹¹Sin found a way to fool me by using the commandment. Sin used the commandment to make me die.

¹²So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and right and good. ¹³Does this mean that something that is good brought death to me? No! Sin used something that is good to bring death to me. This happened so that I could see what sin is really like. The commandment was used to show that sin is something very evil.

The Conflict in Man

¹⁴We know that the law is spiritual. But I am not spiritual. Sin rules me as if I were its slave. ¹⁵I do not understand the things I do. I do not do the good things I want to do. And I do the bad things I hate to do. ¹⁶And if I do not want to do the bad things I do, then that means that I agree that the law is good. ¹⁷But I am not really the one who is doing these bad things. It is sin living in me that does these things. ¹⁸Yes, I know that nothing good lives in me—I mean nothing good lives in the part of me that is earthly and sinful.^a I want to do the things that are good, but I do not do them. ¹⁹I do not do the good things that I want to do. I do the bad things that I do not want to do. ²⁰So if I do things I do not want to do, then I am not the one doing those things. It is sin living in me that does those bad things.

²¹So I have learned this rule: When I want to do good, evil is there with me. ²²In my mind, I am happy with God's law. ²³But I see another law working in my body. That law makes war against the law that my mind accepts. That other law working in my body is the law of sin, and that law makes me its prisoner. ²⁴What a miserable man I am! Who will save me from this body that brings me death? ²⁵God will. I thank him through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So in my mind I am a slave to God's law. But in my sinful self^b I am a slave to the law of sin.

Life in the Spirit

8 So now, those who are in Christ Jesus are not judged guilty. ²I am not judged guilty because in Christ Jesus the law of

^{18a} Or *fleshly*. ^{25b} Or *flesh*.

the Spirit that brings life made me free. It made me free from the law that brings sin and death. ³The law was without power, because the law was made weak by our sinful selves. ⁴But God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son to earth with the same human life that others use for sin. He sent his Son to be an offering to pay for sin. So God used a human life to condemn sin. ⁴He did this so that we could be right as the law said we must be. Now we do not live following our sinful selves, but we live following the Spirit.

⁵Those who live following their sinful selves think only about things that their sinful selves want. But those who live following the Spirit are thinking about the things that the Spirit wants them to do. ⁶If a person's thinking is controlled by his sinful self, then there is spiritual death. But if his thinking is controlled by the Spirit, then there is life and peace. ⁷This is true because if a person's thinking is controlled by his sinful self, then he is against God. He refuses to obey God's law, and really he is not able to obey God's law. ⁸Those people who are ruled by their sinful selves cannot please God.

⁹But you are not ruled by your sinful selves. You are ruled by the Spirit, if that Spirit of God really lives in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, then he does not belong to Christ. ¹⁰Your body will always be dead because of sin. But if Christ is in you, then the Spirit gives you life, because Christ made you right with God. ¹¹God raised Jesus from death. And if God's Spirit is living in you, then he will also give life to your bodies that die. God is the One who raised Christ from death. And he will give life to your bodies through his Spirit that lives in you.

¹²So, my brothers, we must not be ruled by our sinful selves. We must not live the way our sinful selves want. ¹³If you use your lives to do the wrong things your sinful selves want, then you will die spiritually. But if you use the Spirit's help to stop doing the wrong things you do with your body, then you will have life.

¹⁴The true children of God are those who let God's Spirit lead them. ¹⁵The Spirit that we received is not a spirit that makes us slaves again to fear. The Spirit that we have makes us children

^{3d} Or *flesh*; also in verses 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12 and 13.

of God. And with that Spirit we say, "Father, dear Father."¹⁶ And the Spirit himself joins with our spirits to say that we are God's children. ¹⁷If we are God's children, then we will receive the blessings God has for us. We will receive these things from God together with Christ. But we must suffer as Christ suffered, and then we will have glory as Christ has glory.

We Will Have Glory in the Future

¹⁸The sufferings we have now are nothing compared to the great glory that will be given to us. ¹⁹Everything that God made is waiting and eagerly desiring the time when God will show the world who his children are. The whole world wants very much for that to happen. ²⁰Everything that God made was changed to become useless. This was not by its own wish. It happened because God wanted it. But there was this hope: ²¹that everything God made would be set free from ruin. There was hope that everything God made would have the freedom and glory that belong to God's children.

²²We know that everything God made has been waiting until now in pain, like a woman ready to give birth. ²³Not only the world, but we also have been waiting with pain inside us. We have the Spirit as the first part of God's promise. So we are waiting for God to finish making us his own children. I mean we are waiting for our bodies to be made free. ²⁴We were saved, and we have this hope. If we see what we are waiting for, then that is not really hope. People do not hope for something they already have. ²⁵But we are hoping for something that we do not have yet. We are waiting for it patiently.

²⁶Also, the Spirit helps us. We are very weak, but the Spirit helps us with our weakness. We do not know how to pray as we should. But the Spirit himself speaks to God for us, even begs God for us. The Spirit speaks to God with deep feelings that words cannot explain. ²⁷God can see what is in people's hearts. And he knows what is in the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit speaks to God for his people in the way that God wants.

²⁸We know that in everything God works for the good of those who love him. They are the people God called, because

^{15a} Or *Abba, Father*.

that was his plan. ²⁹God knew them before he made the world. And God decided that they would be like his Son. Then Jesus would be the firstborn of many brothers. ³⁰God planned for them to be like his Son. And those he planned to be like his Son, he also called. And those he called, he also made right with him. And those he made right, he also glorified.

God's Love in Christ Jesus

³¹So what should we say about this? If God is with us, then no one can defeat us. ³²God let even his own Son suffer for us. God gave his Son for us all. So with Jesus, God will surely give us all things. ³³Who can accuse the people that God has chosen? No one! God is the One who makes them right. ³⁴Who can say that God's people are guilty? No one! Christ Jesus died, but that is not all. He was also raised from death. And now he is on God's right side and is begging God for us. ³⁵Can anything separate us from the love Christ has for us? Can troubles or problems or persecution? If we have no food or clothes, if we are in danger, or even if death comes—can any of these things separate us from Christ's love? ³⁶As it is written:

“For your sake we are in danger of death all the time.

People think we are worth no more
than sheep to be killed.”

Psalm 44:22

³⁷But in all these things we have full victory through God who showed his love for us. ³⁸⁻³⁹Yes, I am sure that nothing can separate us from the love God has for us. Not death, not life, not angels, not ruling spirits, nothing now, nothing in the future, no powers, nothing above us, nothing below us, or anything else in the whole world will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God and the Jewish People

9 I am in Christ and I am telling you the truth. I do not lie. My feelings are ruled by the Holy Spirit, and they tell me that I am not lying: ²I have great sorrow and always feel much sadness. ³I wish I could help my brothers, my earthly family. I would even wish that I were cursed and cut off from Christ if that would help them. ⁴They are the people of Israel. They are

God's chosen children. They have the glory of God and the agreements. God gave them the law and the right way to worship. And God gave his promises to them. ⁵They are the descendants of our great fathers, and they are the earthly family of Christ. Christ is God over all. Praise him forever!^a Amen.

⁶I do not mean that God failed to keep his promise to them. But only some of the people of Israel are truly God's people.^b

⁷And only some of Abraham's descendants are true children of Abraham. But God said to Abraham: "Only the family of Isaac will be called your people."^c ⁸This means that not all of Abraham's descendants are God's children. Abraham's children are those who become God's children because of the promise God made to Abraham. ⁹God's promise to Abraham was this: "At the right time I will come back, and Sarah will have a son."^d

¹⁰And that is not all. Rebecca also had sons. And those sons had the same father, our father Isaac. ¹¹⁻¹²But before the two boys were born, God told Rebecca, "The older boy will serve the younger."^e This was before the boys had done anything good or bad. God said this before they were born so that the one chosen would be chosen because of God's own plan. He was chosen because he was the one God wanted to call, not because of anything he did. ¹³As the Scripture says, "I loved Jacob, but I hated Esau."^f

¹⁴So what should we say about this? Is God unfair? In no way. ¹⁵God said to Moses, "I will show mercy to whom I want to show mercy. I will show pity to whom I want to show pity."^g

¹⁶So God will choose the one he decides to show mercy to. And his choice does not depend on what people want or try to do.

¹⁷The Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I made you king so you could do this for me. I wanted to show my power in you. I wanted my name to be announced in all the world."^h ¹⁸So God shows mercy where he wants to show mercy, and makes stubborn the people he wants to make stubborn.

¹⁹So one of you will ask me: "Why does God still blame us? Who can fight his will?" ²⁰You are only human. And human beings have no right to question God. A clay jar does not question

^{5a} Or *May God, who rules over all things, be praised forever!*

^{6b} Or *Israel.*

^{7c} Genesis 21:12. ^{9d} Genesis 18:10, 14. ^{11e} Genesis 25:23. ^{13f} Malachi 1:2-3.

^{15g} Exodus 33:19. ^{17h} Exodus 9:16.

the man who made it. The jar does not say, “Why did you make me like this?” ²¹The man who makes the jar can make anything he wants to make. He can use the same clay to make one thing for special use and another thing for daily use.

²²It is the same way with what God has done. God wanted to show his anger and to let people see his power. But God endured patiently those people he was angry with—people who were ready to be destroyed. ²³God waited with patience so that he could make known his rich glory. He wanted to give that glory to the people who receive his mercy. He has prepared these people to have his glory and ²⁴we are those people whom God called. He called us from the Jews and from the non-Jews.

²⁵As the Scripture says in Hosea:

“The people who are not mine—

I will say that they are my people.

And the people that I did not love—

I will say that they are the people I love.”

Hosea 2:23

²⁶“And in the same place that God said,

‘You are not my people’—

in that place they will be called

sons of the living God.”

Hosea 1:10

²⁷And Isaiah cries out about Israel:

There are so many people of Israel that they are like the grains of sand by the sea. But only a few of them will be saved. ²⁸Yes, the Lord will quickly judge the people on the earth.^a

²⁹It is as Isaiah said:

The Lord has all power. The Lord saved some of his people for us. If he had not done that, then we would now be like Sodom, and we would now be like Gomorrah.^b

³⁰So what does all this mean? It means the non-Jews were not trying to make themselves right with God. But they were made right with God, because of their faith. ³¹And the people of Israel tried to follow a law to make themselves right with God. But they did not succeed, ³²because they tried to make them-

^{28a} Isaiah 10:22-23. ^{29b} Isaiah 1:9.

selves right by the things they did. They did not trust in God to make them right. They fell over the stone that causes people to fall. ³³As it is written:

“Look, I put in Zion a stone
that will cause people to trip.
It is a rock that will make them fall.
But the one who trusts in him
will never be made ashamed.”

Isaiah 28:16

10 Brothers, the thing I want most is for all the Jews to be saved. That is my prayer to God. ²I can say this about them: They really try to follow God, but they do not know the right way. ³They did not know the way that God makes people right with him. And they tried to make themselves right in their own way. So they did not accept God’s way of making people right. ⁴Christ ended the law, so that everyone who believes in him may be right with God.

⁵Moses writes about being made right by following the law. He says, “Whoever follows the law will live by it.” ⁶But being made right through faith says: “Do not say to yourself, ‘Who will go up into heaven?’” (that means to bring Christ down). ⁷“And do not say, ‘Who will go down into the world below?’” (that means to bring Christ up from death). ⁸This is what the Scripture says: “God’s teaching is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart.” ⁹That is the teaching of faith that we tell. ⁹If you use your mouth to say, “Jesus is Lord,” and if you believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from death, you will be saved. ¹⁰We believe with our hearts, and so we are made right with God. And we use our mouths to say that we believe, and so we are saved. ¹¹As the Scripture says, “Anyone who believes in him will not be ashamed,” ¹²because there is no difference between Jew and non-Jew. The same Lord is the Lord of all and gives many blessings to all who trust in him. ¹³“Every person who trusts in the Lord will be saved.” ^d

¹⁴But before people can trust in the Lord for help, they must believe in him. And before they can believe in the Lord, they must hear about him. And for them to hear about the Lord,

^{5a} Leviticus 18:5. ^{8b} Deuteronomy 30:12-14. ^{11c} Isaiah 28:16. ^{13d} Joel 2:32.

someone must tell them. ¹⁵ And before someone can go and tell them, he must be sent. It is written, "Beautiful are the feet of those who come to tell good news."^a

¹⁶ But not all the Jews accepted the good news. Isaiah said, "Lord, who believed what we told them?"^b ¹⁷ So faith comes from hearing the Good News. And people hear the Good News when someone tells them about Christ.

¹⁸ But I ask, "Did people not hear the Good News?" Yes, they heard:

"Their voices went out all over the earth.

Their words went everywhere in the world." *Psalm 19:4*

¹⁹ Again I ask, "Did the people of Israel not understand?" First, Moses says:

"I [God] will use a people that is not really a nation
to make you jealous.

I will use a nation that does not understand
to make you angry."

Deuteronomy 32:21

²⁰ Then Isaiah is bold enough to say:

"The people who were not looking for me [God]
found me.

I showed myself to those who did not ask
for me."

Isaiah 65:1

²¹ But about Israel God says, "All day long I have waited for those people who refuse to obey and refuse to follow me."^c

God Has Not Forgotten His People

11 So I ask, "Did God reject his people?" No! I myself am an Israelite. I am from the family of Abraham, from the family group of Benjamin. ² God chose the Israelites to be his people before they were born. And God did not throw out those people. Surely you know what the Scripture says about Elijah, how he prays to God against the people of Israel. Elijah said, ³ "Lord, the people have killed your prophets and destroyed your altars. I am the only prophet still living. And they are trying to kill me now."^d ⁴ But what answer did God give Elijah? He said, "I have kept for myself 7,000 men who still worship me. These 7,000 men have not bowed down to Baal."^e ⁵ It is the

^{15a} Isaiah 52:7. ^{16b} Isaiah 53:1. ^{21c} Isaiah 65:2. ^{3d} 1 Kings 19:10, 14. ^{4e} 1 Kings 19:18.

same now. There are a few people that God has chosen by his grace. ⁶And if God chose them by grace, then it is not for the things they have done. If they could be made God's people by what they did, then God's gift of grace would not really be a gift.

⁷So this is what has happened: The people of Israel did not find what they looked for. But the ones God chose did find it. The others became hard and refused to listen to God. ⁸As it is written:

"God caused the people not to understand,
God closed their eyes so they could not see,
and God closed their ears so they could not hear.

This continues until today."

Deuteronomy 29:4

⁹And David says:

"Let those people be caught and trapped at their
own feasts.

Let them fall and be punished.

¹⁰Let their eyes be closed so they
cannot see.

And let them be troubled forever."

Psalms 69:22-23

¹¹So I ask: When the Jews fell, did that fall destroy them? No! But their mistake brought salvation to the non-Jews. This took place to cause the Jews to be jealous. ¹²The Jews' mistake brought rich blessings for the world. And what the Jews lost brought rich blessings for the non-Jewish people. So surely their fullness will bring much richer blessings.

¹³Now I am speaking to you who are not Jews. I am an apostle to the non-Jews. So while I have that work, I will do the best I can. ¹⁴I hope I can make my own people [the Jews] jealous. That way, maybe I can help some of them to be saved. ¹⁵God turned away from the Jews. When that happened, God became friends with the other people in the world. So when God accepts the Jews, then surely that will bring to them life after death.

¹⁶If the first piece of bread is offered to God, then the whole loaf is made holy. If the roots of a tree are holy, then the tree's branches are holy too.

¹⁷Some of the branches from an olive tree have been broken off, and the branch of a wild olive tree has been joined to that

first tree. You non-Jews are the same as that wild branch, and you now share the strength and life of the first tree [the Jews].

¹⁸So do not boast about those branches that were broken off. You have no reason to boast. Why? You do not give life to the root. The root gives life to you. ¹⁹You will say, "Branches were broken off so that I could be joined to their tree." ²⁰That is true. But those branches were broken off because they did not believe. And you continue to be part of the tree only because you believe. Do not be proud, but be afraid. ²¹If God did not let the natural branches of that tree stay, then he will not let you stay.

²²So you see that God is kind, but he can also be very strict. God punishes those who stop following him. But God is kind to you, if you continue following in his kindness. If you do not continue following him, you will be cut off. ²³And if the Jews will believe in God again, then God will accept the Jews back again. God is able to put them back where they were. ²⁴It is not natural for a wild branch to be part of a good tree. But you non-Jews are like a branch cut from a wild olive tree. And you were joined to a good olive tree. But those Jews are like a branch that grew from the good tree. So surely they can be joined to their own tree again.

²⁵I want you to understand this secret truth, brothers. This truth will help you understand that you do not know everything. The truth is this: Part of Israel has been made stubborn. But that will change when many non-Jews have come in. ²⁶And that is how all Israel will be saved. It is written:

"The Savior will come from Zion;

He will take away all evil from the family of Jacob.

²⁷And I will make this agreement with those people
when I take away their sins."

Isaiah 59:20-21; 27:9

²⁸The Jews refuse to accept the Good News, so they are God's enemies. This has happened to help you non-Jews. But the Jews are still God's chosen people, and God loves them very much. He loves them because of the promises he made to their fathers. ²⁹God never changes his mind about the people he calls and the things he gives them. ³⁰At one time you refused to obey God. But now you have received mercy, because those people [the Jews] refused to obey. ³¹And now the Jews refuse to obey, because God showed mercy to you. But this happened so

that they also can receive mercy from God. ³²All people have refused to obey God. God has given them all over to their stubborn ways, so that God can show mercy to all.

Praise to God

³³Yes, God's riches are very great! God's wisdom and knowledge have no end! No one can explain the things God decides. No one can understand God's ways.

³⁴"Who knows the mind of the Lord?

Who is able to give God advice?"

Isaiah 40:13

³⁵"Who has ever given God anything?

God owes nothing to anyone."

Job 41:11

³⁶Yes, God made all things. And everything continues through God and for God. To God be the glory forever! Amen.

Give Your Lives to God

12 So brothers, since God has shown us great mercy, I beg you to offer your lives as a living sacrifice to him. Your offering must be only for God and pleasing to him. This is the spiritual way for you to worship. ²Do not change yourselves to be like the people of this world. But be changed within by a new way of thinking. Then you will be able to decide what God wants for you. And you will be able to know what is good and pleasing to God and what is perfect.

³God has given me a special gift. That is why I have something to say to everyone among you. Do not think that you are better than you are. You must see yourself as you really are. Decide what you are by the amount of faith God has given you.

⁴Each one of us has a body, and that body has many parts. These parts all have different uses. ⁵In the same way, we are many, but in Christ we are all one body. Each one is a part of that body, and each part belongs to all the other parts. ⁶We all have different gifts. Each gift came because of the grace that God gave us. If one has the gift of prophecy, he should use that gift with the faith he has. ⁷If one has the gift of serving, he should serve. If one has the gift of teaching, he should teach. ⁸If one has the gift of encouraging others, he should encourage. If one has the gift of giving to others, he should give freely.

If one has the gift of being a leader, he should try hard when he leads. If one has the gift of showing kindness to others, that person should do so with joy.

⁹Your love must be real. Hate what is evil. Hold on to what is good. ¹⁰Love each other like brothers and sisters. Give your brothers and sisters more honor than you want for yourselves. ¹¹Do not be lazy but work hard. Serve the Lord with all your heart. ¹²Be joyful because you have hope. Be patient when trouble comes. Pray at all times. ¹³Share with God's people who need help. Bring strangers in need into your homes.

¹⁴Wish good for those who persecute you. Wish them well and do not curse them. ¹⁵Be happy with those who are happy. Be sad with those who are sad. ¹⁶Live together in peace with each other. Do not be proud, but make friends with those who seem unimportant.^a Do not think how smart you are.

¹⁷If someone does wrong to you, do not pay him back by doing wrong to him. Try to do what everyone thinks is right. ¹⁸Do your best to live in peace with everyone. ¹⁹My friends, do not try to punish others when they wrong you. Wait for God to punish them with his anger. It is written: "I am the One who punishes; I will pay people back,"^b says the Lord. ²⁰But you should do this: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if your enemy is thirsty, give him a drink. Doing this will be like pouring burning coals on his head."^c ²¹Do not let evil defeat you. Defeat evil by doing good.

Christians Should Obey the Law

13 All of you must obey the government rulers. No one rules unless God has given him the power to rule. And no one rules now without that power from God. ²So if anyone is against the government he is really against what God has commanded. And so he brings punishment on himself. ³Those who do right do not have to fear the rulers. But people who do wrong must fear them. Do you want to be unafraid of the rulers? Then do what is right, and the ruler will praise you. ⁴He is God's servant to help you. But if you do wrong, then be afraid. The ruler has the power to punish; he is God's servant to

^{16a} Or *be willing to do menial work*. ^{19b} Deuteronomy 32:35. ^{20c} Proverbs 25:21-22.

punish those who do wrong. ⁵So you must obey the government. You must obey not only because you might be punished, but because you know it is the right thing to do.

⁶And this is also why you pay taxes. Rulers are working for God and give their time to their work. ⁷Pay everyone, then, what you owe them. If you owe any kind of tax, pay it. Show respect and honor to them all.

Loving Other People Is the Only Law

⁸Do not continue to owe anyone. But you should always owe love to each other. The person who loves others has obeyed all the law. ⁹Why? This is true because the law says, "Do not be guilty of adultery; do not murder; do not steal; do not want the wrong things."^a All these commandments and all others are really only one rule: "Love your neighbor as you love yourself."^b ¹⁰Love never hurts a neighbor. So loving is obeying all the law.

¹¹I say this because we live in an important time. Yes, it is now time for you to wake up from your sleep. Our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. ¹²The "night" is almost finished. The "day" is almost here. So we should stop doing things that belong to darkness and take up the weapons used for fighting in the light. ¹³Let us live in a right way, like people who belong to the day. We should not have wild parties or get drunk. There should be no sexual sins of any kind, no fighting or jealousy. ¹⁴But clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ. Forget about satisfying your sinful self.^c

Do Not Criticize Other People

14 Do not refuse to accept into your group someone who is weak in faith. And do not argue with him about opinions. ²One person believes that he can eat all kinds of food. But if another man's faith is weak, then he believes he can eat only vegetables. ³The one who knows that he can eat any kind of food must not feel that he is better than the one who eats only vegetables. And the person who eats only vegetables must not think that the one who eats all foods is wrong. God has accepted him. ⁴You cannot judge another man's servant. His own

^{9a} Exodus 20:13-15, 17. ^{9b} Leviticus 19:18. ^{14c} Or *flesh*.

master decides if he is doing well or not. And the Lord's servant will do well because the Lord helps him do well.

⁵One person thinks that one day is more important than another. And someone else thinks that every day is the same. Each one should be sure in his own mind. ⁶The person who thinks one day is more important than other days is doing that for the Lord. And the one who eats all kinds of food is doing that for the Lord. Yes, he gives thanks to God. And the man who refuses to eat some foods does that for the Lord, and he gives thanks to God. ⁷For we do not live or die for ourselves. ⁸If we live, we are living for the Lord. And if we die, we are dying for the Lord. So living or dying, we belong to the Lord.

⁹That is why Christ died and rose from death to live again. He did this so that he would be Lord over both the dead and the living. ¹⁰So why do you judge your brother? And why do you think that you are better than he is? We will all stand before God, and he will judge us all. ¹¹Yes, it is written:

"Everyone will bow before me;

everyone will say that I am God.

As surely as I live, these things will happen,
says the Lord."

Isaiah 45:23

¹²So each of us will have to answer to God for what he has done.

Do Not Cause Other People to Sin

¹³So we should stop judging each other. We must make up our minds not to do anything that will make a brother stumble or fall into sin. ¹⁴I am in the Lord Jesus, and I know that there is no food that is wrong to eat. But if a person believes that something is wrong, then that thing is wrong for him. ¹⁵If you hurt your brother's faith because of something you eat, then you are not really following the way of love. Do not destroy his faith by eating that food. Christ died for him. ¹⁶Do not allow what you think is good to become what others say is evil. ¹⁷In the kingdom of God, eating and drinking are not important. The important things are living right with God, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸Anyone who serves Christ by living this way is pleasing God and will be accepted by other people.

¹⁹So let us try to do what makes peace and helps one another.

²⁰Do not let the eating of food destroy the work of God. All foods are all right to eat, but it is wrong to eat food that causes someone else to sin. ²¹It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that will cause your brother to sin.

²²Your beliefs about these things should be kept secret between you and God. A person is blessed if he can do what he thinks is right without feeling guilty. ²³But if he eats something without being sure that it is right, then he is wrong because he did not believe that it was right. And if he does anything without believing that it is right, then it is a sin.

15 We who are strong in faith should help those who are weak. We should help them with their weaknesses, and not please only ourselves. ²Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to help him be stronger in faith. ³Even Christ did not live to please himself. As it is written: "Those who insulted you have also insulted me."^a ⁴Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that we could have hope. That hope comes from the endurance and encouragement that the Scriptures give us. ⁵Endurance and encouragement come from God. And I pray that God will help you all agree with each other the way Christ Jesus wants. ⁶Then you will all be joined together with one voice to give glory to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷Christ accepted you, so you should accept each other. This will bring glory to God. ⁸I tell you that Christ became a servant of the Jews. This was to show that God's promises to the Jewish fathers are true. ⁹And he also did this so that the non-Jews could give glory to God for the mercy he gives to them. It is written:

"So I will give thanks to you among the non-Jewish people,

I will sing praise to your name."

Psalms 18:49

¹⁰It also says,

"You non-Jews should be happy together with God's people."

Deuteronomy 32:43

¹¹Again it says,

"Praise the Lord all you non-Jews; all people should praise him."

Psalms 117:1

¹²And Isaiah says,

^{3a} *Psalms 69:9.*

“A son will come from Jesse’s family.
He will come to rule over the non-Jews;
and the non-Jews will have hope
because of him.”

Isaiah 11:10

¹³I pray that the God who gives hope will fill you with much joy and peace while you trust in him. Then your hope will overflow by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Paul Talks About this Letter and About His Work

¹⁴My brothers, I am sure that you are full of goodness. I know that you have all the knowledge you need and that you are able to teach each other. ¹⁵But I have written to you very openly about some things that I wanted you to remember. I did this because God gave me this special gift: ¹⁶to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the non-Jewish people. I served God by teaching his Good News, so that the non-Jewish people could be an offering that God would accept—an offering made holy by the Holy Spirit.

¹⁷So I am proud of what I have done for God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁸I will not talk about anything I did myself. I will talk only about what Christ has done with me in leading the non-Jewish people to obey God. They have obeyed God because of what I have said and done. ¹⁹And they have obeyed God because of the power of miracles and the great things they saw, and the power of the Holy Spirit. I preached the Good News from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum. And so I have finished that part of my work. ²⁰I always want to preach the Good News in places where people have never heard of Christ. I do this because I do not want to build on the work that someone else has already started. ²¹But it is written:

“Those who were not told
about him [the Christ] will see,
and those who have not heard about him
will understand.”

Isaiah 52:15

Paul’s Plan to Visit Rome

²²That is why many times I was stopped from coming to you.

²³Now I have finished my work here. Since for many years I have wanted to come to you, ²⁴I hope to visit you on my way

to Spain. I will enjoy being with you, and you can help me on my trip. ²⁵Now I am going to Jerusalem to help God's people. ²⁶Those in Macedonia and Achaia were happy to give their money to help the poor among God's people at Jerusalem. ²⁷They were happy to do this, and really they owe it to them. These non-Jews have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings. So they should use what they have to help the Jews. ²⁸I must be sure that the poor in Jerusalem get the money that has been given for them. After I do this, I will leave for Spain, and stop and visit you. ²⁹I know that when I come to you, I will bring Christ's full blessing.

³⁰Brothers, I beg you to help me in my work by praying for me to God. Do this because of our Lord Jesus and the love that the Holy Spirit gives us. ³¹Pray that I will be saved from the non-believers in Judea. And pray that this help I bring to Jerusalem will please God's people there. ³²Then, if God wants me to, I will come to you. I will come with joy, and together you and I will have a time of rest. ³³The God who gives peace be with you all. Amen.

Paul Has Things to Say to Many Christians in Rome

16 I recommend to you our sister, Phoebe. She is a helper^a in the church in Cenchreae. ²I ask you to accept her in the Lord in the way God's people should. Help her with anything she needs because she has helped me and many other people too.

³Give my greetings to Priscilla and Aquila, who work together with me in Christ Jesus. ⁴They risked their own lives to save my life. I am thankful to them, and all the non-Jewish churches are thankful to them as well. ⁵Also, greet for me the church that meets at their house.

Greetings to my dear friend Epaphroditus. He was the first person to follow Christ in Asia. ⁶Greetings to Mary, who worked very hard for you. ⁷Greetings to Andronicus and Junias, my relatives, who were in prison with me. They are some of God's most important workers.^b They were believers in Christ before I was. ⁸Greetings to Ampliatus, my dear friend in the Lord. ⁹Greetings to Urbanus. He is a worker together with me for

^{1a} Or *deaconsess*. ^{7b} Or *important among (or to) the apostles*.

Christ. And greetings to my dear friend Stachys. ¹⁰Greetings to Apelles. He was tested and proved that he truly loves Christ. Greetings to all those who are in the family of Aristobulus. ¹¹Greetings to Herodion, my relative. Greetings to all those in the family of Narcissus who belong to the Lord. ¹²Greetings to Tryphaena and Tryphosa. Those women work very hard for the Lord. Greetings to my dear friend Persis. She also has worked very hard for the Lord. ¹³Greetings to Rufus who is a special person in the Lord. Greetings to his mother, who has been a mother to me also. ¹⁴Greetings to Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and all the brothers who are with them. ¹⁵Greetings to Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas. And greetings to all the saints with them. ¹⁶Greet each other with a holy kiss. All of Christ's churches send greetings to you.

¹⁷Brothers, I ask you to look out for those who cause people to be against each other and who upset people's faith. They are against the true teaching you learned. Stay away from them.

¹⁸For such people are not serving our Lord Christ. They are only doing what pleases themselves. They use fancy talk and flattery to fool the minds of those who do not know about evil.

¹⁹All the believers have heard that you obey. So I am very happy because of you. But I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil.

²⁰The God who brings peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

²¹Timothy, a worker together with me, sends greetings, as well as Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my relatives.

²²I am Tertius, and I am writing this letter from Paul. I send greetings to you in the Lord.

²³Gaius is letting me and the whole church here use his home. He also sends greetings to you, as do Erastus and our brother Quartus. Erastus is the city treasurer here. ^{24a}

²⁵Glory to God! God is the One who can make you strong in faith by the Good News that I preach and by the message about Jesus Christ. The message about Christ is the secret truth that was hidden for long ages past, but is now made known. ²⁶It has

^{24a} Some Greek copies add verse 24: *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you. Amen.*

been made clear through the writings of the prophets. And by the command of the eternal God it is made known to all nations, that they might believe and obey.

²⁷To the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

1 Corinthians

1 From Paul. I was called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus because that is what God wanted.

Also from Sosthenes, our brother in Christ.

²To the church of God in Corinth, to those who have been made holy in Christ Jesus. You were called to be God's holy people with all people everywhere who trust in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours:

³Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul Gives Thanks to God

⁴I always thank my God for you because of the grace that God has given you in Christ Jesus. ⁵In Jesus you have been blessed in every way, in all your speaking and in all your knowledge. ⁶The truth about Christ has been proved in you. ⁷So you have every gift from God while you wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to come again. ⁸Jesus will keep you strong until the end. He will keep you strong, so that there will be no wrong in you on the day our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. ⁹God is faithful. He is the One who has called you to share life with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Problems in the Church at Corinth

¹⁰I beg you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with each other, so that there will be no divisions among you. I beg that you be completely joined together by having the same kind of thinking and the same pur-

pose. ¹¹My brothers, some people from Chloe's family have told me that there are arguments among you. ¹²This is what I mean: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another says, "I follow Apollos"; another says, "I follow Cephas [Peter]"; and another says, "I follow Christ." ¹³Christ cannot be divided! Did Paul die on the cross for you? No! Were you baptized in the name of Paul? No! ¹⁴I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius. ¹⁵I am thankful, because now no one can say that you were baptized in my name. ¹⁶(I also baptized the family of Stephanas. But I do not remember that I myself baptized any others.) ¹⁷Christ did not give me the work of baptizing people. He gave me the work of preaching the Good News, and he sent me to preach the Good News without using words of worldly wisdom. If I used worldly wisdom to tell the Good News, the cross of Christ would lose its power.

Christ Is the Power and the Wisdom of God

¹⁸The teaching about the cross seems foolish to those who are lost. But to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹It is written:

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise.

I will make the intelligence of the intelligent
worth nothing."

Isaiah 29:14

²⁰Where is the wise person? Where is the educated person? Where is the philosopher of our times? God has made the wisdom of the world foolish. ²¹The world did not know God through its own wisdom. So God chose to use the message that sounds foolish to save those who believe it. ²²The Jews ask for miracles as proofs. The Greeks want wisdom. ²³But we preach Christ on the cross. This is a big problem to the Jews, and it seems foolish to the non-Jews. ²⁴But Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God to those God has called—Jews and Greeks. ²⁵Even the foolishness of God is wiser than men. Even the weakness of God is stronger than men.

²⁶Brothers, look at what you were when God called you. Not many of you were wise in the way the world judges wisdom. Not many of you had great influence. Not many of you came from important families. ²⁷But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise. He chose the weak things

of the world to shame the strong. ²⁸And he chose what the world thinks is not important. He chose what the world hates and thinks is nothing. He chose these to destroy what the world thinks is important. ²⁹God did this so that no man can boast before him. ³⁰It is God who has made you part of Christ Jesus. Christ has become wisdom for us from God. Christ is the reason we are right with God and have freedom from sin; Christ is the reason we are holy. ³¹So, as it is written, "If a person boasts, he should boast only in the Lord."^a

The Message About Christ on the Cross

2 Dear brothers, when I came to you, I did not come as a proud man. I preached God's truth, but not with fancy words or a show of great learning. ²I decided that while I was with you I would forget about everything except Jesus Christ and his death on the cross. ³When I came to you, I was weak and shook with fear. ⁴My teaching and my speaking were not with wise words that persuade people. But the proof of my teaching was the power that the Spirit gives. ⁵I did this so that your faith would be in God's power, not in the wisdom of a man.

God's Wisdom

⁶Yet I speak wisdom to those who are mature. But this wisdom is not from this world or of the rulers of this world. (These rulers are losing their power.) ⁷But I speak God's secret wisdom, which he has kept hidden. God planned this wisdom for our glory, before the world began. ⁸None of the rulers of this world understood it. If they had, they would not have killed the Lord of glory on a cross. ⁹But as it is written:

"No eye has seen,
no ear has heard,
no one has imagined,
what God has prepared for those
who love him."

Isaiah 64:4

¹⁰But God has shown us these things through the Spirit.

The Spirit knows all things, even the deep secrets of God.

¹¹No one knows the thoughts that another person has. Only a person's spirit that lives in him knows his thoughts. It is the

^{31a} Jeremiah 9:24.

same with God. No one knows the thoughts of God. Only the Spirit of God knows God's thoughts. ¹²We did not receive the spirit of the world, but we received the Spirit that is from God. We received this Spirit so that we can know all that God has given us. ¹³When we speak, we do not use words taught to us by the wisdom that men have. We use words taught to us by the Spirit. We use spiritual words to explain spiritual things. ¹⁴A person who is not spiritual does not accept the gifts that come from the Spirit of God. That person thinks they are foolish. He cannot understand the Spirit's gifts, because they can only be judged spiritually. ¹⁵But the spiritual person is able to make judgments about all things. Yet no one can judge him.

¹⁶"Who knows the mind of the Lord?

Who can tell the Lord what to do?"

Isaiah 40:13

But we have the mind of Christ.

Following Men Is Wrong

3 Brothers, I could not talk to you as I talk to spiritual people. I had to talk to you as I would to people of the world—babies in Christ. ²The teaching I gave you was like milk, not solid food. I did this because you were not ready for solid food, and even now you are not ready. ³You are still not spiritual. You have jealousy and arguing among you. This shows that you are not spiritual but are acting as people of the world. ⁴One of you says, "I follow Paul," and another says, "I follow Apollos." When you say things like this, you are acting as worldly people.

⁵Is Apollos important? No! Is Paul important? No! We are only servants of God who helped you believe. Each one of us did the work God gave us to do. ⁶I planted the seed [teaching] and Apollos watered it. But God is the One who made the seed grow. ⁷So the one who plants is not important, and the one who waters is not important. Only God is important, because he is the One who makes things grow. ⁸The one who plants and the one who waters have the same purpose. And each will be rewarded for his own work. ⁹We are workers together for God. And you are like a farm that belongs to God.

And you are a house that belongs to God. ¹⁰Like an expert builder I built the foundation of that house. I used the gift that

God gave me to do this. Others are building on that foundation. But everyone should be careful how he builds. ¹¹The foundation has already been built. No one can build any other foundation. The foundation that has already been laid is Jesus Christ. ¹²Anyone can build on that foundation, using gold, silver, jewels, wood, grass, or straw. ¹³But the work that each person does will be clearly seen, because the Day will make it plain. That Day will appear with fire, and the fire will test every man's work. ¹⁴If the building that a man puts on the foundation still stands, he will get his reward. ¹⁵But if his building is burned up, he will suffer loss. The man will be saved, but it will be as if he escaped from a fire.

¹⁶You should know that you yourselves are God's temple. God's Spirit lives in you. ¹⁷If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him, because God's temple is holy. And you yourselves are God's temple.

¹⁸Do not fool yourselves. If anyone among you thinks he is wise in this world, he should become a fool. Then he can become truly wise, ¹⁹because the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God. It is written, "He [God] catches the wise when they use their sly ways."^a ²⁰It is also written, "The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise. He knows that their thoughts are worth nothing."^b ²¹So you should not boast about men. All things are yours: ²²Paul, Apollos, and Cephas [Peter]; the world, life, death, the present, and the future—all these things are yours. ²³And you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.

Apostles of Christ

4 This is what people should think about us: We are servants of Christ. We are the ones God has trusted with his secret truths. ²A person who is trusted with something must show that he is worthy of that trust. ³I do not care if I am judged by you or if I am judged by any human court. I do not even judge myself. ⁴I know of no wrong that I have done, but this does not make me innocent. The Lord is the One who judges me. ⁵So do not judge before the right time; wait until the Lord comes. He

^{19a} Job 5:13. ^{20b} Psalm 94:11.

will bring to light things that are now hidden in darkness. He will make known the secret purposes of people's hearts. Then God will give everyone the praise he should get.

⁶Brothers, I have used Apollos and myself as examples. I did this so that you could learn from us the meaning of the words, "Follow only what is written." Then you will not be proud of one man and hate another. ⁷Who says that you are better than others? Everything you have was given to you. And if this is so, why do you boast as if you got these things by your own power?

⁸You think you have everything you need. You think you are rich. You think you have become kings without us. I wish you really were kings! Then we could be kings together with you. ⁹But it seems to me that God has given me and the other apostles the last place. We are like men condemned to die. We are like a show for the whole world to see—angels and people. ¹⁰We are fools for Christ's sake. But you think you are very wise in Christ. We are weak, but you think you are strong. You receive honor, but we are hated. ¹¹Even now we still do not have enough to eat or drink or enough clothes. We are often beaten. We have no homes. ¹²We work hard with our own hands. People curse us, but we bless them. They persecute us, and we accept it. ¹³They say evil things against us, but we say only kind things to them. Even today, we are treated as though we are the garbage of the world—the dirt of the earth.

¹⁴I am not trying to make you feel ashamed. I am writing this to give you a warning as if you were my own dear children. ¹⁵For though you may have 10,000 teachers in Christ, you do not have many fathers. Through the Good News I became your father in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶So I beg you, please be like me. ¹⁷That is why I am sending Timothy to you. He is my son in the Lord. I love Timothy, and he is faithful. He will help you remember the way I live in Christ Jesus. This way of life is what I teach in all the churches everywhere.

¹⁸Some of you have become boasters. You boast, thinking that I will not come to you again. ¹⁹But I will come very soon if the Lord wants me to. Then I will see what those who boast can do, not what they say. ²⁰I want to see this because the king-

dom of God is not talk but power. ²¹Which do you want: that I come to you with punishment, or that I come with love and gentleness?

Immorality in the Church

5 Now, it is actually being said that there is sexual sin among you. And it is a kind that does not happen even among those who do not know God. A man there has his father's wife. ²And still you are proud of yourselves! You should have been filled with sadness. And the man who did that sin should be put out of your group. ³My body is not there with you, but I am with you in spirit. And I have already judged the man who did that sin. I judged him just as I would if I were really there. ⁴Come together in the name of our Lord Jesus. I will be with you in spirit, and you will have the power of our Lord Jesus with you. ⁵Then give this man to Satan, so that his sinful self^a will be destroyed. And then his spirit can be saved on the day of the Lord.

⁶Your boasting is not good. You know the saying, "Just a little yeast makes the whole batch of dough rise." ⁷Take out all the old yeast, so that you will be a new batch of dough. And you really are new dough without yeast. For Christ, our Pass-over lamb, was killed. ⁸So let us continue our feast, but not with the bread that has the old yeast. That old yeast is the yeast of sin and wrongdoing. But let us eat the bread that has no yeast. This is the bread of goodness and truth.

⁹I wrote to you in my letter that you should not associate with those who are guilty of sexual sin. ¹⁰But I did not mean that you should not associate with the sinful people of this world. People of the world are guilty of sexual sin, or they are selfish and they cheat each other, or they worship idols. But to get away from them you would have to leave this world. ¹¹I am writing to tell you that the person you must not associate with is this: anyone who calls himself a brother in Christ but who is guilty of sexual sin, or is selfish, or worships idols, or says bad things to others, or gets drunk, or cheats. Do not even eat with someone like that.

^aOr *flesh*.

¹²⁻¹³It is not my business to judge those who are not part of the church. God will judge them. But you must judge the people who are part of the church. "Take the evil person out of your group."^a

Judging Problems Between Christians

6 When one of you has something against a brother in Christ, why do you go to the judges who are not right with God? Why do you not let God's people decide who is right? ²Surely you know that God's people will judge the world. So if you are to judge the world, then surely you are able to judge small things as well. ³You know that in the future we will judge angels. So surely we can judge things in this life. ⁴So if you have disagreements that must be judged, why do you take them to those who are not part of the church?^b ⁵I say this to shame you. Surely there is someone among you wise enough to judge a complaint between two brothers in Christ. ⁶But now one brother goes to court against another brother. And you let men who are not believers judge their case!

⁷The lawsuits that you have against each other show that you are already defeated. It would be better for you to let someone wrong you! It would be better for you to let someone cheat you! ⁸But you yourselves do wrong and cheat! And you do this to your own brothers.

⁹⁻¹⁰Surely you know that the people who do wrong will not receive God's kingdom. Do not be fooled. These people will not receive God's kingdom: those who sin sexually, or worship idols, or are guilty of adultery, or are male prostitutes, or are homosexuals, or steal, or are selfish, or get drunk, or say bad things to others, or cheat. ¹¹In the past, some of you were like that. But you were washed clean, you were made holy, and you were made right with God in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Use Your Bodies for God's Glory

¹²"All things are allowed for me." But not all things are good. "All things are allowed for me." But I will not let anything be

^{13a} Deuteronomy 17:7; 19:19; 22:21, 24; 24:7. ^{4b} Or do you appoint as judges men of little account in the church?

my master. ¹³“Food is for the stomach, and the stomach for food.” Yes, but God will destroy them both. The body is not for sexual sin. The body is for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body. ¹⁴By God’s power God raised the Lord from death. And God will also raise us from death. ¹⁵Surely you know that your bodies are parts of Christ himself. So I must never take parts of Christ and join them to a prostitute! ¹⁶It is written, “The two will become one body.”^a So you should know that a man who joins himself with a prostitute becomes one with her in body. ¹⁷But the one who joins himself with the Lord is one with the Lord in spirit.

¹⁸So run away from sexual sin. Every other sin that a man does is outside his body. But the one who sins sexually sins against his own body. ¹⁹You should know that your body is a temple for the Holy Spirit, who is in you. You have received the Holy Spirit from God. You do not own yourselves, but ²⁰you were bought for a price. So honor God with your bodies.

About Marriage

7 Now I will discuss the things you wrote to me about. It is good for a man not to marry. ²But sexual sin is a danger. So each man should have his own wife, and each woman should have her own husband. ³The husband should give his wife all that she should have as his wife. And the wife should give her husband all that he should have as her husband. ⁴The wife does not have power over her own body. Her husband has the power over her body. And the husband does not have power over his own body. His wife has the power over his body. ⁵Do not refuse to give your bodies to each other, unless you both agree to stay apart for a time. You might do this so that you can give your time to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan cannot tempt you in your weakness. ⁶I say this to give you permission. It is not a command. ⁷I wish everyone were like me, but each person has his own gift from God. One has one gift, another has another gift.

⁸Now for those who are not married and for the widows I say this: It is good for them to stay single as I am. ⁹But if they cannot control their bodies, then they should marry. It is better

^{16a} Genesis 2:24.

to marry than to burn with sexual desires.

¹⁰Now I give this command for the married people. (The command is not from me; it is from the Lord.) A wife should not leave her husband. ¹¹But if she does leave, she must not marry again. Or she should go back to her husband. Also the husband should not divorce his wife.

¹²For all the others I say this (I am saying this, not the Lord): A brother in Christ might have a wife who is not a believer. If she will live with him, he must not divorce her. ¹³And a woman might have a husband who is not a believer. If he will live with her, she must not divorce him. ¹⁴The husband who is not a believer is made holy through his wife. And the wife who is not a believer is made holy through her believing husband.^a If this were not true, then your children would not be clean. But now your children are holy.

¹⁵But if the person who is not a believer decides to leave, let him leave. When this happens, the brother or sister in Christ is free. God called us to a life of peace. ¹⁶Wife, maybe you will save your husband; and husband, maybe you will save your wife. You do not know now what will happen later.

Live as God Called You

¹⁷But each one should continue to live the way God has given him to live—the way he was when God called him. This is a rule I make in all the churches. ¹⁸If a man was already circumcised when he was called, he should not change his circumcision. If a man was without circumcision when he was called, he should not be circumcised. ¹⁹It is not important if a man is circumcised or not circumcised. The important thing is obeying God's commands. ²⁰Each one should stay the way he was when God called him. ²¹If you were a slave when God called you, do not let that bother you. But if you can be free, then become free. ²²The person who was a slave when the Lord called him is free in the Lord. He belongs to the Lord. In the same way, the one who was free when he was called is now Christ's slave. ²³You all were bought for a price. So do not become slaves of men. ²⁴Brothers, in your new life with God remain as you were when you were called.

^{14a} Or *through the brother*.

Paul Answers Questions About Getting Married

²⁵Now I write about people who are not married.^a I have no command from the Lord about this, but I give my opinion. And I can be trusted because of the Lord's mercy. ²⁶This is a time of trouble. So I think that it is good for you to stay the way you are. ²⁷If you have a wife, then do not try to become free from her. If you are not married, then do not try to find a wife. ²⁸But if you decide to marry, this is not a sin. And it is not a sin for a girl who has never married to get married. But those who marry will have trouble in this life. And I want you to be free from this trouble.

²⁹Brothers, this is what I mean: We do not have much time left. So starting now, those who have wives should use their time as if they had no wives. ³⁰Those who are sad should live as if they are not sad. Those who are happy should live as if they are not happy. Those who buy things should live as if they own nothing. ³¹Those who use the things of the world should live as if those things are not important to them. You should live like this, because this world, the way it is now, will soon be gone.

³²I want you to be free from worry. A man who is not married is busy with the Lord's work. He is trying to please the Lord. ³³But a man who is married is busy with things of the world. He is trying to please his wife. ³⁴So he must think about two things. A woman who is not married or a girl who has never married is busy with the Lord's work. She wants to give herself fully—body and soul—to the Lord. But a married woman is busy with things of the world. She is trying to please her husband. ³⁵I am saying this to help you. I am not trying to limit you. But I want you to live in the right way. And I want you to give yourselves fully to the Lord without giving your time to other things.

³⁶A man might think that he is not doing the right thing with the girl he is engaged to. The girl might be almost past the best age to marry. So he might feel that he should marry her. He should do what he wants. They should get married. It is no sin. ³⁷But another man might be more sure in his mind. There may be no need for marriage, so he is free to do what he wants. If he

^{25a} Or *virgins*.

has decided in his own heart not to marry, he is doing the right thing. ³⁸So the man who marries his girl does right, and the man who does not marry does even better.

³⁹A woman must stay with her husband as long as he lives. If the husband dies, she is free to marry any man she wants. But she must marry in the Lord. ⁴⁰The woman is happier if she does not marry again. This is my opinion, and I believe that I have God's Spirit.

About Food Offered to Idols

8 Now I will write about meat that is sacrificed to idols. We know that "we all have knowledge." "Knowledge" puffs you up with pride, but love builds up. ²Whoever thinks he knows something does not yet know anything as he should. ³But he who loves God is known by God.

⁴So this is what I say about eating meat sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol is really nothing in the world. And we know that there is only one God. ⁵It is really not important if there are things called gods, in heaven or on earth. (And there are many "gods" and "lords.") ⁶But for us there is only one God. He is our Father. All things came from him and we live for him. And there is only one Lord—Jesus Christ. All things were made through Jesus, and we also have life through him.

⁷But not all people know this. Until now, some people have had the habit of worshiping idols. So now when they eat meat, they still feel as if it belongs to an idol. They are not sure that it is right to eat this meat. When they eat it, they feel guilty. ⁸But food will not make us closer to God. Refusing to eat does not make us worse, and eating does not make us better in God's sight.

⁹But be careful with your freedom. Your freedom may cause those who are weak in faith to fall into sin. ¹⁰You have "knowledge," so you might eat in an idol's temple. Someone who is weak in faith might see you eating there. This would encourage him to eat meat sacrificed to idols. But he really thinks it is wrong. ¹¹So this weak brother is ruined because of your "knowledge." And Christ died for this brother. ¹²When you sin against your brothers like this and cause them to do what they feel is wrong, you are also sinning against Christ. ¹³So if the food I eat

makes my brother fall into sin, I will never eat meat again. I will stop eating meat, so that I will not cause my brother to sin.

Paul Is Like the Other Apostles

9 I am a free man. I am an apostle. I have seen Jesus our Lord. You people are all an example of my work in the Lord. ²Others may not accept me as an apostle, but surely you accept me. You are proof that I am an apostle in the Lord.

³Some people want to judge me. So this is the answer I give them: ⁴Do we not have the right to eat and drink? ⁵Do we not have the right to bring a believing wife with us when we travel? The other apostles, the Lord's brothers, and Cephas [Peter] all do this. ⁶And are Barnabas and I the only ones who must work to earn our living? ⁷No soldier ever serves in the army and pays his own salary. No one ever plants a field of grapevines without eating some of the grapes himself. No person takes care of a flock of sheep without drinking some of the milk himself.

⁸This is not only what men think. God's law says the same thing. ⁹Yes, it is written in the law of Moses: "When an ox is working in the grain, do not cover its mouth."^a When God said this, was he thinking only about oxen? No. ¹⁰He was really talking about us. Yes, that Scripture was written for us. The one who plows and the one who works in the grain should hope to get some of the grain for their work. ¹¹We planted spiritual seed among you. So we should be able to harvest from you some things for this life. Surely this is not asking too much. ¹²Other men have the right to get something from you. So surely we have this right, too. But we do not use this right. No, we endure everything ourselves so that we will not stop anyone from obeying the Good News of Christ. ¹³Surely you know that those who work at the temple get their food from the temple. And those who serve at the altar get part of what is offered at the altar. ¹⁴It is the same with those who tell the Good News. The Lord has commanded that those who tell the Good News should get their living from this work.

¹⁵But I have not used any of these rights. And I am not writing this now to get anything from you. I would rather die than to have my reason for boasting taken away. ¹⁶Telling the Good

^{9a} Deuteronomy 25:4.

News is not my reason for boasting. Telling the Good News is my duty—something I must do. And how bad it will be for me if I do not tell the Good News. ¹⁷If I preach because it is my own choice, I deserve a reward. But I have no choice. I must tell the Good News. I am only doing the duty that was given to me. ¹⁸So what reward do I get? This is my reward: that when I tell the Good News I can offer it freely. In this way I do not use my right to be paid in my work for the Good News.

¹⁹I am free. I belong to no man. But I make myself a slave to all people. I do this to help save as many people as I can. ²⁰To the Jews I became like a Jew. I did this to help save the Jews. I myself am not ruled by the law. But to those who are ruled by the law I became like one who is ruled by the law. I did this to help save those who are ruled by the law. ²¹To those who are without the law I became like a person who is without the law. I did this to help save those people who are without the law. (But really, I am not without God's law—I am ruled by Christ's law.) ²²To those who are weak, I became weak so that I could help save them. I have become all things to all people. I did this so that I could save some of them in any way possible. ²³I do all this because of the Good News. I do it so that I can share in the blessings of the Good News.

²⁴You know that in a race all the runners run. But only one gets the prize. So run like that. Run to win! ²⁵All those who compete in the games use strict training. They do this so that they can win a crown. But that crown is an earthly thing that lasts only a short time. Our crown will continue forever. ²⁶So I do not run without a goal. I fight like a boxer who is hitting something—not just the air. ²⁷It is my own body that I hit. I make it my slave. I do this so that I myself will not be rejected after I have preached to others.

Don't Be Like the Jews

10 Brothers, I want you to know what happened to our ancestors. They were all under the cloud, and they all went through the sea. ²They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. ³They all ate the same spiritual food. ⁴And they all drank the same spiritual drink. They drank from that

spiritual rock that was with them. That rock was Christ. ⁵But God was not pleased with most of them. They died in the desert.

⁶And these things that happened are examples for us. They should stop us from wanting evil things as those people did. ⁷Do not worship idols, as some of them did. It is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink. And they got up to dance."^a ⁸We should not be guilty of sexual sins, as some of them were. In one day 23,000 of them died. ⁹We should not test the Lord as some of them did. They were killed by snakes. ¹⁰And do not complain as some of them did. They were killed by the angel that destroys.

¹¹The things that happened to those people are examples. And they were written down to be warnings for us. For we live in a time when all these things of the past have reached their goal. ¹²So anyone who thinks he is standing strong should be careful not to fall. ¹³The only temptations that you have are the temptations that all people have. But you can trust God. He will not let you be tempted more than you can bear. But when you are tempted, God will also give you a way to escape that temptation. Then you will be able to endure it.

¹⁴So, my dear friends, stay away from worshiping idols. ¹⁵I am speaking to you, as to intelligent people; judge for yourselves what I say. ¹⁶Is not the cup of blessing that we give thanks for a sharing in the blood [death] of Christ? And the bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? ¹⁷There is one loaf of bread. And we are many people. But we all share from that one loaf. So we are really one body.

¹⁸Think about the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices share in the altar? ¹⁹I do not mean that the food sacrificed to an idol is something important or that an idol is anything at all. ²⁰But I say that what is sacrificed to idols is offered to demons, not to God. And I do not want you to share anything with demons. ²¹You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons, too. You cannot share in the Lord's table and the table of demons, too. ²²Do we want to make the Lord jealous? We are not stronger than he is, are we?

^{7a} Exodus 32:6.

Use Your Freedom for God's Glory

²³“All things are allowed.” Yes. But not all things are good for me. “All things are allowed.” Yes. But not all things help others grow stronger. ²⁴No one should try to do what will help only himself. He should try to do what is good for others.

²⁵Eat any meat that is sold in the meat market. Do not ask questions to see if it is something you think is wrong to eat, ²⁶“because the earth and everything in it belong to the Lord.”^a

²⁷Someone who is not a believer may invite you to eat with him. If you want to go, eat anything that is put before you. Do not ask questions to see if it is something you think might be wrong to eat. ²⁸But if anyone says to you, “That food was offered to idols,” then do not eat it. Do not eat it because of that person who told you and because eating it would be something that might be thought wrong. ²⁹I don’t mean that you think it is wrong, but the other person might think it is wrong. My own freedom should not be judged by what someone else thinks. ³⁰I eat the meal with thankfulness. And I do not want to be criticized because of something I thank God for.

³¹So if you eat, or if you drink, or if you do anything, do everything for the glory of God. ³²Never do anything that might make others do wrong—Jews, Greeks, or God’s church. ³³I do the same thing. I try to please everybody in every way. I am not trying to do what is good for me. I try to do what is good for the most people so that they can be saved.

11 Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

Being Under Authority

²I praise you because you remember me in everything. You follow closely the teachings that I gave you. ³But I want you to understand this: The head [authority] of every man is Christ, and the head of a woman is the man.^b And the head of Christ is God. ⁴Every man who prophesies or prays with his head covered brings shame to his head. ⁵But every woman who prays or prophesies should have her head covered. If her head is not covered, she brings shame to her head. She is the same as a woman who has her head shaved. ⁶If a woman does not cover

^{26a} Psalms 24:1; 50:12; 89:11. ^{3b} Or *her husband*.

her head, it is the same as cutting off all her hair. But it is shameful for a woman to cut off her hair or to shave her head. So she should cover her head. ⁷But a man should not cover his head, because he is made like God and is God's glory. But woman is man's glory. ⁸Man did not come from woman, but woman came from man. ⁹And man was not made for woman. Woman was made for man. ¹⁰So that is why a woman should have her head covered with something to show that she is under authority. And also she should do this because of the angels.

¹¹But in the Lord the woman is important to the man, and the man is important to the woman. ¹²This is true because woman came from man, but also man is born from woman. Really, everything comes from God. ¹³Decide this for yourselves: Is it right for a woman to pray to God without something on her head? ¹⁴Even nature itself teaches you that wearing long hair is shameful for a man. ¹⁵But wearing long hair is a woman's honor. Long hair is given to the woman to cover her head. ¹⁶Some people may still want to argue, but I would add that neither we nor the churches of God accept any other practice.

The Lord's Supper

¹⁷In the things I tell you now I do not praise you. Your meetings hurt you more than they help you. ¹⁸First, I hear that when you meet together as a church you are divided. And I believe some of this. ¹⁹(It is necessary for there to be differences among you. That is the way to make it clear which of you are really doing right.) ²⁰When you all come together, you are not really eating the Lord's Supper. ²¹This is because when you eat, each person eats without waiting for the others. Some people do not get enough to eat, while others have too much to drink. ²²You can eat and drink in your own homes! It seems that you think God's church is not important. You embarrass those who are poor. What should I tell you? Should I praise you for doing this? I do not praise you.

²³The teaching that I gave you is the same teaching that I received from the Lord: On the night when Jesus was given to be killed, he took bread ²⁴and gave thanks for it. Then he broke the bread and said, "This is my body; it is for you. Do this to re-

member me.” ²⁵In the same way, after they ate, Jesus took the cup. He said, “This cup shows the new agreement that begins with my blood [death]. When you drink this, do it to remember me.” ²⁶Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you make known the Lord’s death until he comes.

²⁷So if anyone eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in a way that is not worthy, he is sinning against the body and the blood of the Lord. ²⁸Everyone should look into his own heart before he eats the bread and drinks the cup. ²⁹If someone eats the bread and drinks the cup without recognizing the body, then he is judged guilty by eating and drinking. ³⁰That is why many in your group are sick and weak, and many have died. ³¹But if we judged ourselves in the right way, then God would not judge us. ³²But when the Lord judges us, he punishes us to show us the right way. He does this so that we will not be condemned along with the world.

³³So my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for each other. ³⁴If anyone is hungry, he should eat at home. Do this so that your meeting together will not bring God’s judgment on you. I will tell you what to do about the other things when I come.

Gifts from the Holy Spirit

12 Now, brothers, I want you to understand about spiritual gifts. ²You remember the lives you lived before you were believers. You let yourselves be influenced and led away to worship idols—things that have no life. ³So I tell you that no one who is speaking with the help of God’s Spirit says, “Jesus be cursed.” And no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” without the help of the Holy Spirit.

⁴There are different kinds of gifts, but they are all from the same Spirit. ⁵There are different ways to serve, but all these ways are from the same Lord. ⁶And there are different ways that God works in people, but all these are from the same God. God works in us all in everything we do. ⁷Something from the Spirit can be seen in each person to help everyone. ⁸The Spirit gives one person the ability to speak with wisdom. And the same Spirit gives another person the ability to speak with knowl-

edge. ⁹The same Spirit gives faith to one person. And that one Spirit gives another gifts of healing. ¹⁰The Spirit gives to another person the power to do miracles, to another the ability to prophesy, to another the ability to know the difference between good and evil spirits. The Spirit gives one person the ability to speak in different kinds of languages, and to another the ability to interpret those languages. ¹¹One Spirit, the same Spirit, does all these things. The Spirit decides what to give each person.

The Body of Christ

¹²A person's body is only one thing, but it has many parts. Yes, there are many parts to a body, but all those parts make only one body. Christ is like that, too: ¹³Some of us are Jews and some of us are Greeks; some of us are slaves and some of us are free. But we were all baptized into one body through one Spirit. And we were all made to share in the one Spirit.

¹⁴A person's body has more than one part. It has many parts. ¹⁵The foot might say, "I am not a hand. So I am not part of the body." But saying this would not stop the foot from being a part of the body. ¹⁶The ear might say, "I am not an eye. So I am not part of the body." But saying this would not make the ear stop being a part of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, the body would not be able to hear. If the whole body were an ear, the body would not be able to smell anything. ¹⁸⁻¹⁹ If each part of the body were the same part, then there would be no body. But truly God put the parts in the body as he wanted them. He made a place for each one of them. ²⁰And so there are many parts, but only one body.

²¹The eye cannot say to the hand, "I do not need you!" And the head cannot say to the foot, "I do not need you!" ²²The parts of the body that seem to be weaker are really very important. ²³And the parts of the body that we think are not worth much are the parts that we give the most care to. And we give special care to the parts of the body that we want to hide. ²⁴The more beautiful parts of the body don't need this special care. But God put the body together and gave more honor to the parts that need it. ²⁵God did this so that our bodies would not be divided. God wanted the different parts to care the same for

each other. ²⁶If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer with it. Or if one part of the body is honored, all the other parts share its honor.

²⁷All of you together are the body of Christ. Each one of you is a part of that body. ²⁸And in the church God has given a place first to apostles, second to prophets, and third to teachers. Then God has given a place to those who do miracles, those who have gifts of healing, those who can help others, those who are able to lead, and those who can speak in different languages. ²⁹Not all are apostles. Not all are prophets. Not all are teachers. Not all do miracles. ³⁰Not all have gifts of healing. Not all speak in different languages. Not all interpret those languages. ³¹But you should truly want to have the greater gifts. And now I will show you the best way of all.

Love

13 I may speak in different languages of men or even angels. But if I do not have love, then I am only a noisy bell or a clanging cymbal. ²I may have the gift of prophecy; I may understand all the secret things and all knowledge; and I may have faith so great that I can move mountains. But even with all these things, if I do not have love, then I am nothing. ³I may give everything I have to feed the poor. And I may even give my body to be burned. But I gain nothing by doing these things if I do not have love.

⁴Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous, it does not boast, and it is not proud. ⁵Love is not rude, is not selfish, and does not become angry easily. Love does not remember wrongs done against it. ⁶Love is not happy with evil, but is happy with the truth. ⁷Love patiently accepts all things. It always trusts, always hopes, and always continues strong.

⁸Love never ends. There are gifts of prophecy, but they will be ended. There are gifts of speaking in different languages, but those gifts will end. There is the gift of knowledge, but it will be ended. ⁹This knowledge and these prophecies we have are not complete, ¹⁰but when perfection comes, the things that are not complete will end. ¹¹When I was a child, I talked like a child; I thought like a child; I reasoned like a child. When I be-

came a man, I stopped those childish ways. ¹²Now we see as if we are looking into a dark mirror. But at that time, in the future, we shall see clearly. Now I know only a part, but at that time I will know fully, as God has known me. ¹³So these three things will last forever: faith, hope, and love. And the greatest of these is love.

Use Spiritual Gifts to Help the Church

14 Love, then, is what you should try for. And you should truly want to have the spiritual gifts. And the gift you should want most is to be able to prophesy. ²I will explain why. One who has the gift of speaking in a different language is not speaking to people. He is speaking to God. No one understands him—he is speaking secret things through the Spirit. ³But one who prophesies is speaking to people. He gives people strength, encouragement, and comfort. ⁴The one who speaks in a different language is helping only himself. But the one who prophesies is helping the whole church. ⁵I would like all of you to speak in different kinds of languages. But more, I want you to prophesy. The person who prophesies is greater than the one who can only speak in different languages—unless someone is there who can explain what he says. Then the whole church can be helped.

⁶Brothers, will it help you if I come to you speaking in different languages? No! It will help you only if I bring you a new truth or some knowledge, or some prophecy, or some teaching. ⁷It is the same as with non-living things that make sounds—like a flute or a harp. If different musical notes are not made clear, you will not know what song is being played. Each note must be played clearly to be able to understand the tune. ⁸And if the trumpet does not sound clearly, the soldiers will not know it is time to prepare for fighting. ⁹It is the same with you. The words you speak with your tongue must be clear. Unless you speak clearly, no one can understand what you are saying. You will be talking in the air! ¹⁰It is true that there are many kinds of speech in the world, and they all have meaning. ¹¹So unless I understand the meaning of what someone says to me, I am a stranger to him, and he is a stranger to me. ¹²It is the

same with you. You want spiritual gifts very much. So try most to have the gifts that help the church grow stronger.

¹³The one who has the gift of speaking in a different language should pray that he can also interpret what he says. ¹⁴If I pray in a different language, my spirit is praying, but my mind does nothing. ¹⁵So what should I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind. I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind. ¹⁶You might be praising God with your spirit. But a person there without understanding cannot say "Amen" to your prayer of thanks, because he does not know what you are saying. ¹⁷You may be thanking God in a good way, but the other person is not helped.

¹⁸I thank God that my gift of speaking in different kinds of languages is greater than any of yours. ¹⁹But in the church meetings I would rather speak five words that I understand than ten thousand words in a different language.

²⁰Brothers, do not think like children. In evil things be like babies, but in your thinking you should be like full-grown men.

²¹It is written in the law:

"Using those who speak different
kinds of languages
and using the lips of foreigners,
I will speak to these people;
but even then they
will not obey me."

Isaiah 28:11-12

That is what the Lord says.

²²So the gift of speaking in different kinds of languages is a proof for those who do not believe, not for those who believe. And prophecy is for people who believe, not for those who do not believe. ²³Suppose the whole church meets together and everyone speaks in different languages. If some people come in who are without understanding or do not believe, they will say you are crazy. ²⁴But suppose everyone is prophesying and someone comes in who does not believe or is without understanding. If everyone is prophesying, his sin will be shown to him, and he will be judged by all that he hears. ²⁵The secret things in his heart will be made known. So he will bow down and worship God. He will say, "Truly, God is with you."

Your Meetings Should Help the Church Grow Strong

²⁶So, brothers, what should you do? When you meet together, one person has a song, another has a teaching, another has a new truth from God, another speaks in a different language, and another interprets that language. The purpose of all these things should be to help the church grow strong. ²⁷If anyone speaks in a different language, then it should be only two, or not more than three, who speak. They should speak one after the other. And someone else should interpret. ²⁸But if there is no interpreter, then anyone who speaks in a different language should be quiet in the church meeting. He should speak only to himself and to God.

²⁹And only two or three prophets should speak. The others should judge what they say. ³⁰And if a message from God comes to another person who is sitting, the first speaker should stop. ³¹You can all prophesy one after the other. In this way all the people can be taught and encouraged. ³²The spirits of prophets are under the control of the prophets themselves. ³³God is not a God of confusion but a God of peace.

³⁴Women should keep quiet in the church meetings. This is true in all the churches of God's people. Women are not allowed to speak. They must be under control. This is also what the law says. ³⁵If there is something the women want to know, they should ask their own husbands at home. It is shameful for a woman to speak in the church meeting. ³⁶Did God's teaching come from you? Or are you the only ones who have received that teaching?

³⁷If anyone thinks that he is a prophet or that he has a spiritual gift, then he should understand that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command. ³⁸If he does not know this, then he is not known by God.

³⁹So my brothers, you should truly want to prophesy. And do not stop people from speaking in different kinds of languages. ⁴⁰But let everything be done in a way that is right and orderly.

The Good News About Christ

15 Now, brothers, I want you to remember the Good News I brought to you. You received this Good News and you

continue to be strong in it. ²And you are saved by this Good News. But you must continue believing what I told you. If you do not, then you believed for nothing.

³I passed on to you what I received. And this was the most important: that Christ died for our sins, as the Scriptures say; ⁴that he was buried and was raised to life on the third day as the Scriptures say; ⁵and that he showed himself to Peter, and then to the twelve apostles. ⁶After that, Jesus showed himself to more than 500 of the brothers at the same time. Most of them are still living today, but some have died. ⁷Then Jesus showed himself to James and later to all the apostles again. ⁸Last of all he showed himself to me—as to a person not born at the normal time. ⁹All the other apostles are greater than I am. This is because I persecuted the church of God. And this is why I am not even good enough to be called an apostle. ¹⁰But God's grace has made me what I am. And his grace to me was not wasted. I worked harder than all the other apostles. (But I was not really the one working. It was God's grace that was with me.) ¹¹So then it is not important if I preached to you or if the other apostles preached to you—we all preach the same thing, and this is what you believed.

We Will Be Raised from Death

¹²It is preached that Christ was raised from death. So why do some of you say that people will not be raised from death? ¹³If no one will ever be raised from death, then Christ was not raised from death. ¹⁴And if Christ was not raised, then our preaching is worth nothing. And your faith is worth nothing. ¹⁵And also, we will be guilty of lying about God, because we have preached about him by saying that he raised Christ from death. And if people are not raised from death, then God never raised Christ from death. ¹⁶If the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. ¹⁷And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is for nothing; you are still guilty of your sins. ¹⁸And also, those in Christ who have already died are lost. ¹⁹If our hope in Christ is for this life only, we should be pitied more than anyone else in the world.

²⁰But Christ has truly been raised from death—the first one and proof that those who are asleep in death will also be raised.

²¹Death comes to everyone because of what one man [Adam] did. But the rising from death also happens because of one man [Christ]. ²²In Adam all of us die. In the same way, in Christ all of us will be made alive again. ²³But everyone will be raised to life in the right order. Christ was first to be raised. When Christ comes again, those who belong to him will be raised to life. ²⁴Then the end will come. Christ will destroy all rulers, authorities, and powers, and he will give the kingdom to God the Father. ²⁵Christ must rule until God puts all enemies under Christ's control.^a ²⁶The last enemy to be destroyed will be death. ²⁷"God put all things under his control."^b When it says that "all things" are put under him [Christ], it is clear that this does not include God himself. God is the one putting everything under Christ's control. ²⁸After everything has been put under Christ, then the Son himself will be put under God. God is the One who put all things under Christ. Christ will be put under God, so that God will be the complete ruler over everything.

²⁹If the dead are never raised, then what will people do who are baptized for those who have died? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them?

³⁰And what about us? Why do we put ourselves in danger every hour? ³¹I die every day. This is true, brothers, just as it is true that I boast about you in Christ Jesus our Lord. ³²If I fought wild animals in Ephesus only for human reasons, I have gained nothing. If the dead are not raised, then, "Let us eat and drink, because tomorrow we die."^c

³³Do not be fooled: "Bad friends will ruin good habits."

³⁴Come back to your right way of thinking and stop sinning. I say this to shame you—some of you do not know God.

What Kind of Body Will We Have?

³⁵But someone may ask, "How are the dead raised? What kind of body will they have?" ³⁶These are stupid questions. When you plant something, it must die before it can live and grow. ³⁷And when you plant it, what you plant does not have the same "body" that it will have later. What you plant is only a seed, maybe wheat or something else. ³⁸But God gives it a body that he has planned for it. And God gives each kind of seed its

^{25a} Or *feet*. ^{27b} Psalm 8:6. ^{32c} Isaiah 22:13; 56:12.

own body. ³⁹All things made of flesh are not the same kinds of flesh: People have one kind of flesh, animals have another kind, birds have another, and fish have another. ⁴⁰Also there are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies. But the beauty of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the beauty of the earthly bodies is another kind. ⁴¹The sun has one kind of beauty, the moon has another beauty, and the stars have another. And each star is different in its beauty.

⁴²It is the same with the dead who are raised to life. The body that is "planted" will ruin and decay. But that body is raised to a life that cannot be destroyed. ⁴³When the body is "planted," it is without honor. But it is raised in glory. When the body is "planted," it is weak. But when it is raised, it has power. ⁴⁴The body that is "planted" is a physical body. When it is raised, it is a spiritual body.

There is a physical body, and there is also a spiritual body. ⁴⁵It is written: "The first man [Adam] became a living person."^a But the last Adam [Christ] became a spirit that gives life. ⁴⁶The spiritual man did not come first. It was the physical man who came first; then came the spiritual. ⁴⁷The first man came from the dust of the earth. The second man came from heaven. ⁴⁸People belong to the earth. They are like the first man of earth. But those who belong to heaven are like the man of heaven. ⁴⁹We were made like the man of earth. So we will also be made like the man of heaven.

⁵⁰I tell you this, brothers: Flesh and blood cannot have a part in the kingdom of God. A thing that will ruin cannot have a part in something that never ruins. ⁵¹But listen, I tell you this secret: We will not all die, but we will all be changed. ⁵²It will only take the time of a second. We will be changed as quickly as an eye blinks. This will happen when the last trumpet blows. The trumpet will blow and those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we will all be changed. ⁵³This body that will ruin must clothe itself with something that will never ruin. And this body that dies must clothe itself with something that will never die. ⁵⁴So this body that ruins will clothe itself with that which never ruins. And this body that dies will clothe itself

^{45a} Or *soul*. ^{45b} Genesis 2:7.

with that which never dies. When this happens, then what was written will be made true:

“Death is swallowed up in victory.”

Isaiah 25:8

⁵⁵ “Death, where is your victory?

Death, where is your power to hurt?”

Hosea 13:14

⁵⁶ Death’s power to hurt is sin and the power of sin is the law.

⁵⁷ But we thank God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁵⁸ So my dear brothers, stand strong. Don’t let anything change you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your work in the Lord is never wasted.

The Offering for Other Believers

16 Now, about the collection for God’s people: Do the same thing that I told the Galatian churches to do. ²On the first day of every week each one of you should put aside as much money as you can from what you are blessed with. You should save it up, so that you will not have to collect money after I come. ³When I arrive I will send some men to take your gift to Jerusalem. These will be men who you all agree should go. I will send them with letters of introduction. ⁴If it seems good for me to go also, these men will go along with me.

Paul’s Plans

⁵I plan to go through Macedonia. So I will come to you after I go through there. ⁶Maybe I will stay with you for a time. I might even stay all winter. Then you can help me on my trip, wherever I go. ⁷I do not want to come to see you now, because I would have to leave to go other places. I hope to stay a longer time with you, if the Lord allows it. ⁸But I will stay at Ephesus until Pentecost. ⁹I will stay, because a good opportunity for a great and growing work has been given to me now. And there are many people working against me.

¹⁰Timothy might come to you. Try to make him feel comfortable with you, because he is working for the Lord just as I am.

¹¹So none of you should refuse to accept Timothy. Help him on

his trip in peace, so that he can come back to me. I am expecting him to come back with the brothers.

¹²Now about our brother Apollos: I strongly encouraged him to visit you with the other brothers. But he was sure that he did not want to go now. But when he has the opportunity, he will go to you.

Paul Ends his Letter

¹³Be careful. Continue strong in the faith. Have courage, and be strong. ¹⁴Do everything in love.

¹⁵You know that the family of Stephanas were the first believers in Achaia. They have given themselves to the service of God's people. I ask you, brothers, ¹⁶to follow the leading of people like these, and anyone else who works and serves with them.

¹⁷I am happy that Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus have come. You are not here, but they have filled your place. ¹⁸They have given rest to my spirit and to yours. You should recognize the value of men like these.

¹⁹The churches in Asia send greetings to you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you in the Lord. Also the church that meets in their house greets you. ²⁰All the brothers here send greetings. Give each other a holy kiss when you meet.

²¹I am Paul, and I am writing this greeting with my own hand.

²²If anyone does not love the Lord, then let him be separated from God—lost forever!

Come, O Lord!^a

²³The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.

²⁴My love be with all of you in Christ Jesus.

^{22a} Aramaic *marana tha*. Or *Our Lord has come*.

2 Corinthians

1 From Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus. I am an apostle because that is what God wanted.

Also from Timothy our brother.

To the church of God in Corinth, and to all of God's people in the whole country of Achaia:

²Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul Gives Thanks to God

³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is the Father who is full of mercy, and he is the God of all comfort. ⁴He comforts us every time we have trouble, so that we can comfort others when they have trouble. We can comfort them with the same comfort that God gives us. ⁵We share in the many sufferings of Christ. In the same way, much comfort comes to us through Christ. ⁶If we have troubles, it is for your comfort and salvation. If we have comfort, then you also have comfort. This helps you to accept patiently the same sufferings that we have. ⁷Our hope for you is strong, because we know that you share in our sufferings. So we know that you also share in the comfort we receive.

⁸Brothers, we want you to know about the trouble we suffered in the country of Asia. We had burdens there that were greater than our own strength. We even gave up hope for life. ⁹Truly, in our own hearts we believed that we would die. But this happened so that we would not trust in ourselves but in

God, who raises people from death.¹⁰ God saved us from these great dangers of death, and he will continue to save us. We have put our hope in him, and he will save us again.¹¹ And you can help us with your prayers. Then many people will give thanks for us—that God blessed us because of their many prayers.

The Change in Paul's Plans

¹²This is what we are proud of, and I can say with all my heart that it is true: In all the things we have done in the world, we have done everything with an honest and pure heart from God. And this is even more true in what we have done with you. We did this by God's grace, not by the kind of wisdom the world has.¹³ For we write to you only what you can read and understand. And I hope that ¹⁴as you have understood some things about us, you may come to know everything about us. Then you can be proud of us, as we will be proud of you on the day our Lord Jesus Christ comes again.

¹⁵I was very sure of all this. That is why I made plans to visit you first. Then you could be blessed twice.¹⁶ I planned to visit you on my way to Macedonia, and then I planned to visit you again on my way back. I wanted to get help from you for my trip to Judea.¹⁷ Do you think that I made these plans without really thinking? Or maybe you think I make plans as the world does, so that I say "Yes, yes," and at the same time "No, no."

¹⁸But if you can believe God, then you can believe that what we tell you is never both "Yes" and "No."¹⁹ The Son of God, Jesus Christ, that Silas and Timothy and I preached to you, was not "Yes" and "No." In Christ it has always been "Yes."²⁰ The "Yes" to all of God's promises is in Christ. And that is why we say "Amen" through Christ to the glory of God.²¹ And God is the One who makes you and us strong in Christ. God gave us his special blessing.^a ²²He put his mark on us to show that we are his. And he put his Spirit in our hearts to be a guarantee for all he has promised.

²³I tell you this, and I ask God to be my witness that this is true: The reason I did not come back to Corinth was that I did not want to punish or hurt you.²⁴ I do not mean that we are

^{21a} Or anointed us.

trying to control your faith. You are strong in faith. But we are workers with you for your own happiness.

2 So I decided that my next visit to you would not be another visit to make you sad. ²If I make you sad, then who will make me happy? Only you can make me happy—you whom I made sad. ³I wrote you a letter for this reason: that when I came to you I would not be made sad by the people who should make me happy. I felt sure of all of you. I felt sure that you would share my joy. ⁴When I wrote to you before, I was very troubled and unhappy in my heart. I wrote with many tears. I did not write to make you sad, but to let you know how much I love you.

Forgive the Person Who Did Wrong

⁵Someone there among you has caused sadness. He caused this not to me, but to all of you—I mean he caused sadness to all in some way. (I do not want to make it sound worse than it really is.) ⁶The punishment that most of you gave him is enough for him. ⁷But now you should forgive him and comfort him. This will keep him from having too much sadness and giving up completely. ⁸So I beg you to show him that you love him. ⁹This is why I wrote to you. I wanted to test you and see if you obey in everything. ¹⁰If you forgive someone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven—if I had anything to forgive—I forgave it for you, and Christ was with me. ¹¹I did this so that Satan would not win anything from us. We know very well what Satan's plans are.

Paul's Anxiety in Troas

¹²When I went to Troas to preach the Good News of Christ, the Lord gave me a good opportunity. ¹³But I had no peace because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I said good-bye and went to Macedonia.

Victory Through Christ

¹⁴But thanks be to God, who always leads us in victory through Christ. God uses us to spread his knowledge everywhere like a sweet-smelling perfume. ¹⁵Our offering to God is this: We are the sweet smell of Christ among those who are

being saved and among those who are being lost. ¹⁶To those who are lost, we are the smell of death that brings death. But to those who are being saved, we are the smell of life that brings life. So who is able to do this work? ¹⁷We do not sell the word of God for a profit as many other people do. No! But in Christ we speak in truth before God. We speak as men sent from God.

Servants of the New Covenant

3 Are we starting to boast about ourselves again? Do we need letters of introduction to you or from you, like some other people? ²You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts. It is known and read by everyone. ³You show that you are a letter from Christ that he sent through us. This letter is not written with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God. It is not written on stone tablets, but it is written on human hearts.

⁴We can say this, because through Christ we feel sure before God. ⁵I do not mean that we are able to say that we can do this work ourselves. It is God who makes us able to do all that we do. ⁶God made us able to be servants of a new agreement. This new agreement is not a written law. It is of the Spirit. The written law brings death, but the Spirit gives life.

Paul's Service Is Greater than Moses' Service

⁷The service that brought death [the law] was written in words on stone. It came with God's glory. Moses' face was so bright with glory that the people of Israel could not continue to look at his face. And that glory later disappeared. ⁸So surely the service that brings the Spirit has even more glory. ⁹That service [the law] judged people guilty of sin, but it had glory. So surely the service that makes people right with God has much greater glory. ¹⁰That old service had glory, but it really loses its glory when it is compared to the much greater glory of this new service. ¹¹If that service which disappeared came with glory, then this service which continues forever has much greater glory.

¹²We have this hope, so we are very brave. ¹³We are not like Moses. He put a covering over his face so that the people of Israel would not see it. The glory was disappearing, and Moses did not want them to see it end. ¹⁴But their minds were closed.

Even today that same covering hides the meaning when they [the Jews] read the old agreement. That covering is taken away only through Christ. ¹⁵But even today, when they the law of Moses, there is a covering over their minds. ¹⁶But when a person changes and follows the Lord, that covering is taken away. ¹⁷The Lord is the Spirit. And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸Our faces, then, are not covered. We all show the Lord's glory, and we are being changed to be like him. This change in us brings more and more glory. And it comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Preaching the Good News

4 God, through his mercy, gave us this work to do. So we do not give up. ²But we have turned away from secret and shameful ways. We use no trickery, and we do not change the teaching of God. We teach the truth plainly. This is how we show everyone who we are. And this is how they can know in their hearts what kind of people we are before God. ³The Good News that we preach may be hidden, but it is hidden only to those who are lost. ⁴The ruler^a of this world [the devil] has blinded the minds of those who do not believe. They cannot see the light of the Good News—the Good News about the glory of Christ, who is exactly like God. ⁵We do not preach about ourselves. But we preach that Jesus Christ is Lord; and we preach that we are your servants for Jesus. ⁶God once said, "Let the light shine out of the darkness!" This is the same God who made his light shine in our hearts. He gave us light by letting us know the glory of God that is in the face of Christ.

Spiritual Treasure in Clay Jars

⁷We have this treasure in clay jars. This shows that this great power is from God, not from us. ⁸We have troubles all around us, but we are not defeated. We do not know what to do, but we do not give up. ⁹We are persecuted, but God does not leave us. We are hurt sometimes, but we are not destroyed. ¹⁰We carry the death of Jesus in our own bodies, so that the life of Jesus can also be seen in our bodies. ¹¹We are alive, but for Jesus

^{4a} Or the god.

we are always in danger of death. This is so that the life of Jesus can be seen in our bodies that die. ¹²So death is working in us, but life is working in you.

¹³It is written, "I believed, so I spoke."^a Our faith is like this, too. We believe, and so we speak. ¹⁴God raised the Lord Jesus from death, and we know that God will also raise us with Jesus. God will bring us together with you, and we will stand before him. ¹⁵All these things are for you. And so the grace of God is being given to more and more people. This will bring more and more thanks to God for his glory.

Living by Faith

¹⁶So we do not give up. Our physical body is becoming older and weaker, but our spirit inside us is made new every day. ¹⁷We have small troubles for a while now, but they are helping us gain an eternal glory. That glory is much greater than the troubles. ¹⁸So we set our eyes not on what we see but on what we cannot see. What we see will last only a short time, but what we cannot see will last forever.

5 We know that the tent [body] we live in here on earth will be destroyed. But when that happens, God will have a house for us to live in. It will not be a house made by men, but it will be a home in heaven that will last forever. ²But now we are tired of this body. We want God to give us our heavenly home. ³It will clothe us and we will not be naked. ⁴While we live in this tent [body], we have burdens and we complain. We do not want to be naked, but we want to be clothed. Then this body that dies will be fully covered with life. ⁵This is what God made us for, and he has given us the Spirit to be a guarantee.

⁶So we always have courage. We know that while we live in this body, we are away from the Lord. ⁷We live by what we believe, not by what we can see. ⁸So I say that we have courage. And we really want to be away from this body and be at home with the Lord. ⁹Our only goal is to please God. We want to please him whether we live here or there. ¹⁰For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. Each one will receive what he deserves—good or bad—for the things he did when he lived in the earthly body.

^{13a} Psalm 116:10.

Helping People Become God's Friends

¹¹We know what it means to fear the Lord. So we try to help people accept the truth. God knows what we really are, and I hope that in your hearts you know, too. ¹²We are not trying to prove ourselves to you again. But we are telling you about ourselves, so you will be proud of us. Then you will have an answer for those who are proud about things that can be seen. They do not care about what is in the heart. ¹³If we are out of our minds, it is for God. If we have our right mind, then it is for you. ¹⁴The love of Christ controls us, because we know that One [Christ] died for all. So all have died. ¹⁵Christ died for all so that those who live would not continue to live for themselves. He died for them and was raised from death so that they would live for him.

¹⁶From this time on we do not think of anyone as the world does. It is true that in the past we thought of Christ as the world thinks. But we no longer think of him in that way. ¹⁷If anyone is in Christ, then he is made new. The old things have gone; everything is made new! ¹⁸All this is from God. Through Christ, God made peace between us and himself. And God gave us the work of bringing everyone into peace with him. ¹⁹I mean that God was in Christ, making peace between the world and himself. In Christ, God did not hold the world guilty of its sins. And he gave us this message of peace. ²⁰So we have been sent to speak for Christ. It is as if God is calling to you through us. We speak for Christ when we beg you to be at peace with God. ²¹Christ had no sin, but God made him become sin.^a God did this for us so that in Christ we could become right with God.

6 We are workers together with God. So we beg you: Do not let the grace that you received from God be for nothing. ²God says,

“I heard you at the right time,
and I gave you help on the
day of salvation.”

Isaiah 49:8

I tell you that the “right time” is now. The “day of salvation” is now.

³We do not want anyone to find anything wrong with our

^{21a} Or *to be a sin offering*.

work. So we do nothing that will be a problem for anyone. ⁴But in every way we show that we are servants of God: in accepting many hard things, in troubles, in difficulties, and in great problems. ⁵We are beaten and thrown into prison. Men become upset and fight us. We work hard, and sometimes we get no sleep or food. ⁶We show that we are servants of God by living a pure life, by our understanding, by our patience, and by our kindness. We show this by the Holy Spirit, by true love, ⁷by speaking the truth, and by God's power. We use our right living to defend ourselves against everything. ⁸Some people honor us, but others shame us. Some people say good things about us, but others say bad things. Some people say we are liars, but we speak the truth. ⁹We are not known, but we are well known. We seem to be dying, but look—we continue to live. We are punished, but we are not killed. ¹⁰We have much sadness, but we are always rejoicing. We are poor, but we are making many people rich. We have nothing, but really we have everything.

¹¹We have spoken freely to you in Corinth. We have opened our hearts to you. ¹²Our feelings of love for you have not stopped. It is you that have stopped your feelings of love for us. ¹³I speak to you as if you were my children. Do to us as we have done—open your hearts to us.

Warning About Living with Non-Christians

¹⁴You are not the same as those who do not believe. So do not join yourselves to them. Good and bad do not belong together. Light and darkness cannot share together. ¹⁵How can Christ and Belial [the devil] have any agreement? What can a believer have together with a non-believer? ¹⁶The temple of God cannot have any agreement with idols, and we are the temple of the living God. As God said:

"I will live with them and walk with them,
I will be their God,
and they will be my people."

Leviticus 26:11-12

¹⁷"So come away from them
and separate yourselves from them,
says the Lord.

Touch nothing that is not clean,
and I will accept you."

Isaiah 52:11

¹⁸ "I will be your father,
and you will be my sons and daughters,
says the Lord All-Powerful."

2 Samuel 7:14; 7:8

7 Dear friends, we have these promises. So we should make ourselves pure—free from anything that makes body or soul unclean. We should try to become perfect in the way we live, because we respect God.

Paul's Joy

²Open your hearts to us. We^d have not done wrong to anyone. We have not ruined anyone, and we have cheated no one. ³I do not say this to blame you. I told you before that we love you so much that we would live or die with you. ⁴I feel very sure of you. I am very proud of you. You give me much comfort, and in all of our troubles I have great joy.

⁵When we came into Macedonia, we had no rest. We found trouble all around us. We had fighting on the outside and fear on the inside. ⁶But God comforts those who are troubled. And God comforted us when Titus came. ⁷We were comforted by his coming and also by the comfort that you gave him. Titus told us about your wish to see me, about your sorrow, and about your great care for me. When I heard this, I was much happier.

⁸Even if the letter I wrote you made you sad, I am not sorry I wrote it. I know it made you sad, and I was sorry for that. But it made you sad only for a short time. ⁹Now I am happy, but not because you were made sad. I am happy because your sorrow made you change your hearts. You became sad in the way God wanted you to. So you were not hurt by us in any way. ¹⁰Being sorry in the way God wants makes a person change his heart and life. This leads to salvation, and we cannot be sorry for that. But the kind of sorrow the world has will bring death. ¹¹You had the kind of sorrow God wanted you to have. Now see what this sorrow has brought you: It made you very serious. It made you want to prove that you were not wrong. It made you angry and afraid. It made you want to see me. It made you care.

It made you want the right thing to be done. You proved that you were not guilty in any part of the problem. ¹²I wrote that letter, but not because of the one who did the wrong. And it was not written because of the person who was hurt. But I wrote the letter so that you could see, before God, the great care that you have for us. ¹³That is why we were comforted.

We were very comforted. And we were even happier to see that Titus was so happy. All of you made him feel much better. ¹⁴I boasted to Titus about you, and you showed that I was right. Everything that we said to you was true. And you have proved that what we boasted about to Titus is true. ¹⁵And his love for you is stronger when he remembers that you were all ready to obey. You welcomed him with respect and fear. ¹⁶I am very happy that I can trust you fully.

Christian Giving

8 And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God gave the churches in Macedonia. ²They have been tested by great troubles. They are very poor, but they gave much because of their great joy. ³I can tell you that they gave as much as they were able. They gave even more than they could afford. No one told them to do it. ⁴But they asked us again and again—they begged us to let them share in this service for God's people. ⁵And they gave in a way that we did not expect: They first gave themselves to the Lord and to us. This is what God wants. ⁶So we asked Titus, who started this work, to help you finish this special work of grace. ⁷You are rich in everything—in faith, in speaking, in knowledge, in truly wanting to help, and in the love you learned from us. And so we want you to be rich also in this gift of giving.

⁸I am not commanding you to give, but I want to see if your love is true love. I do this by showing you that others really want to help. ⁹You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. You know that Christ was rich, but for you he became poor. Christ did this so that by his being poor you might become rich.

¹⁰This is what I think you should do: Last year you were the first to want to give, and you were the first who gave. ¹¹So now finish the work. Then your "doing" will be equal to your "wanting to do." Give from what you have. ¹²If you want to give, your

gift will be accepted. Your gift will be judged by what you have, not by what you do not have. ¹³We do not want you to have troubles while other people are at ease. We want everything to be equal. ¹⁴At this time you have plenty. What you have can help others who are in need. Then later, when they have plenty, they can help you when you are in need. Then all will be equal.

¹⁵As it is written:

“The one who gathered much
did not have too much,
and the one who gathered little
did not have too little.”

Exodus 16:18

Titus and His Companions

¹⁶I thank God because he gave Titus the same love for you that I have. ¹⁷Titus accepted what we asked him to do. He wanted very much to go to you. This was his own idea. ¹⁸We are sending with him the brother who is praised by all the churches. He is praised because of his service in preaching the Good News. ¹⁹Also, this brother was chosen by the churches to go with us when we deliver this gift. We are doing this service to bring glory to the Lord and to show that we really want to help.

²⁰We are being careful so that no one will criticize us about the way we are handling this large gift. ²¹We are trying to do what is right. We want to do what the Lord accepts as right and also what people think is right.

²²Also, we are sending with them our brother who is always eager to help. He has proved this to us in many ways. And he wants to help even more now because he has much faith in you.

²³Now about Titus—he is my partner who is working with me to help you. And about the other brothers—they are sent from the churches, and they bring glory to Christ. ²⁴So show these men that you really have love. Show them why we are proud of you. Then all the churches can see it.

Help for Fellow Christians

9 I really do not need to write to you about this help for God's people. ²I know that you want to help. I have been boasting about this to the people in Macedonia. I have told them that

you in Achaia have been ready to give since last year. And your wanting to give has made most of them here [in Macedonia] ready to give also. ³But I am sending the brothers to you. I do not want our boasting about you in this to be for nothing. I want you to be ready, as I said you would be. ⁴If any of the people from Macedonia come with me and find that you are not ready, we will be ashamed that we were so sure of you. (And you will be ashamed, too!) ⁵So I thought that I should ask these brothers to go to you before we come. They will finish getting in order the gift you promised. Then the gift will be ready when we come, and it will be a gift you wanted to give—not a gift that you hated to give.

⁶Remember this: The person who plants a little will have a small harvest. But the person who plants a lot will have a big harvest. ⁷Each one should give, then, what he has decided in his heart to give. He should not give if it makes him sad, and he should not give if he thinks he is forced to give. God loves the person who gives happily. ⁸And God can give you more blessings than you need. Then you will always have plenty of everything. You will have enough to give to every good work. ⁹It is written:

“He gives generously to the poor;
his kindness will continue forever.”

Psalm 112:9

¹⁰God is the One who gives seed to the man who plants, and he gives bread for food. And God will give you all the seed you need and make it grow. He will make a great harvest from your goodness [giving]. ¹¹He will make you rich in every way so that you can always give freely. And your giving through us will cause many to give thanks to God. ¹²This service that you do helps the needs of God’s people and brings more and more thanks to God. ¹³This service you do is a proof of your faith. Many people will praise God because of it. They will praise God because you follow the Good News of Christ—the Good News you say you believe. They will praise God because you freely share with them and with all others. ¹⁴And when they pray, they will wish they could be with you because of the great grace that God has given you. ¹⁵Thanks be to God for his gift that is too wonderful to explain.

Paul Defends His Ministry

10 I, Paul, am begging you with the gentleness and the kindness of Christ. Some people say that I am humble when I am with you, and brave when I am away. ²They think that we live in a worldly way. I plan to be very bold against them when I come. I beg you that when I come I will not need to use that same boldness with you. ³We do live in the world. But we do not fight in the same way that the world fights. ⁴We fight with weapons that are different from those the world uses. Our weapons have power from God. These weapons can destroy strong places. We destroy men's arguments. ⁵And we destroy every proud thing that raises itself against the knowledge of God. We capture every thought and make it give up and obey Christ. ⁶We are ready to punish anyone there who does not obey. But first we want you to obey fully.

⁷You must look at the facts before you. If anyone feels sure that he belongs to Christ, then he must remember that we belong to Christ just as he does. ⁸It is true that we boast freely about the authority the Lord gave us. But he gave us this authority to strengthen you, not to hurt you. So I will not be ashamed of the boasting we do. ⁹I don't want you to think that I am trying to scare you with my letters. ¹⁰Some people say, "Paul's letters are powerful and sound important. But when he is with us, he is weak. And his speaking is nothing." ¹¹They should know this: We are not there with you now, so we say these things in letters. But when we are there with you, we will show the same authority that we show in our letters.

¹²We do not dare to put ourselves in the same group with those who think that they are very important. We do not compare ourselves to them. They use themselves to measure themselves, and they judge themselves by what they themselves are. This shows that they know nothing. ¹³But we will not boast about things outside the work that was given us to do. We will limit our boasting to the work that God gave us. And this work includes our work with you. ¹⁴We are not boasting too much. We would be boasting too much if we had not already come to you. But we have come to you with the Good News of Christ. ¹⁵We limit our boasting to the work that is ours. We do not boast in the work other men have done. We hope that your faith will

continue to grow and that you will help our work to grow much larger. ¹⁶We want to tell the Good News in the areas beyond your city. We do not want to boast about work that has already been done in another man's area. ¹⁷But, "The person who boasts should boast in the Lord." ¹⁸It is not the one who says he is good who is accepted but the one that the Lord thinks is good.

Paul and the False Apostles

11 I wish you would be patient with me even when I am a little foolish. But you are already doing that. ²I am jealous over you, and this jealousy comes from God. I promised to give you to Christ to be his pure bride.^a He must be your only husband. ³But I am afraid that your minds will be led away from your true and pure following of Christ. This might happen just as Eve was tricked by the snake [the devil] with his evil ways. ⁴You easily put up with anyone who comes to you and preaches a different Jesus than the one we preached. You are very willing to accept a spirit or good news that is different from the Spirit and Good News that you received from us.

⁵I do not think that those "great apostles" are any better than I am. ⁶I may not be a trained speaker, but I do have knowledge. We have shown this to you clearly in every way.

⁷I preached God's Good News to you without pay. I humbled myself to make you important. Do you think that was wrong?

⁸I accepted pay from other churches. I took their money so that I could serve you. ⁹If I needed something when I was with you, I did not trouble any of you. The brothers who came from Macedonia gave me all that I needed. I did not allow myself to be a burden to you in any way. And I will never be a burden to you.

¹⁰No one in Achaia will stop me from boasting about that. I say this with the truth of Christ in me. ¹¹Why? Do you think it is because I do not love you? No. God knows that I love you.

¹²And I will keep on doing what I am doing now. I will continue because I want to stop those people from having a reason to boast. They would like to say that the work they boast about is the same as ours. ¹³Such men are not true apostles. They are workers who lie, and they change themselves to look like apos-

^{2a} Or virgin.

ties of Christ. ¹⁴This does not surprise us. Even Satan changes himself to look like an angel of light. ¹⁵So it does not surprise us if Satan's servants also make themselves look like servants who work for what is right. But in the end they will be punished for what they do.

Paul Tells About His Sufferings

¹⁶I tell you again: No one should think that I am a fool. But if you think that I am a fool, then accept me as you would accept a fool. Then I can boast a little, too. ¹⁷I boast because I feel sure of myself. But I am not talking as the Lord would talk. I am boasting like a fool. ¹⁸Many people are boasting about their lives in the world. So I will boast, too. ¹⁹You are wise, so you will gladly put up with fools! ²⁰You even put up with someone who orders you around and uses you! You put up with those who trick you, or think they are better than you, or hit you in the face! ²¹It is shameful to me to say this, but we were too "weak" to do those things to you!

But if anyone else is brave enough to boast, then I also will be brave and boast. (I am talking like a fool.) ²²Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they from Abraham's family? So am I. ²³Are they serving Christ? I am serving him more. (I am crazy to talk like this.) I have worked much harder than they. I have been in prison more often. I have been hurt more in beatings. I have been near death many times. ²⁴Five times the Jews have given me their punishment of 39 lashes with a whip. ²⁵Three different times I was beaten with rods. One time they tried to kill me with rocks. Three times I was in ships that were wrecked, and one of those times I spent the night and the next day in the sea. ²⁶I have gone on many travels. And I have been in danger from rivers, from thieves, from my own people [the Jews], and from those who are not Jews. I have been in danger in cities, in places where no one lives, and on the sea. And I have been in danger with false brothers. ²⁷I have done hard and tiring work, and many times I did not sleep. I have been hungry and thirsty. Many times I have been without food. I have been cold and without clothes. ²⁸Besides all this, there is on me every day the load of my concern for all

the churches. ²⁹I feel weak every time someone is weak. I feel upset every time someone is led into sin.

³⁰If I must boast, I will boast about the things that show I am weak. ³¹God knows that I am not lying. He is the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, and he is to be praised forever. ³²When I was in Damascus, the governor under King Aretas wanted to arrest me. So he put guards around the city. ³³But my friends put me in a basket. Then they put the basket through a hole in the wall and lowered me down. So I escaped from the governor.

A Special Blessing in Paul's Life

12 I must continue to boast. It will do no good, but I will talk now about visions and revelations from the Lord. ²I know a man in Christ who was taken up to the third heaven 14 years ago. I do not know whether the man was in his body or out of his body. But God knows. ³⁻⁴And I know that this man was taken up to paradise. I don't know if he was in his body or away from his body. But he heard things he is not able to explain. He heard things that no man is allowed to tell. ⁵I will boast about a man like that. But I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses. ⁶But if I wanted to boast about myself, I would not be a fool because I would be telling the truth. But I will not boast about myself. I do not want people to think more of me than what they see me do or hear me say.

⁷But I must not become too proud of the wonderful things that were shown to me. So a painful problem^a was given to me. This problem is a messenger from Satan. It is sent to beat me and keep me from being too proud. ⁸I begged the Lord three times to take this problem away from me. ⁹But the Lord said to me, "My grace is enough for you. When you are weak, then my power is made perfect in you." So I am very happy to boast about my weaknesses. Then Christ's power can live in me. ¹⁰So I am happy when I have weaknesses, insults, hard times, persecutions, and all kinds of troubles. All these things are for Christ. And I am happy, because when I am weak, then I am truly strong.

^{7a} Or thorn in the flesh.

Paul's Love for the Christians in Corinth

¹¹I have become foolish, but you drove me to it. You are the ones who should say good things about me. I am worth nothing, but those "great apostles" are not worth any more than I am! ¹²When I was with you, I did what proves that I am an apostle—signs, wonders, and miracles. And I did these things with much patience. ¹³So you received everything that the other churches have received. Only one thing was different: I was not a burden to you. Forgive me for this!

¹⁴I am now ready to visit you the third time. And I will not be a burden to you. I want nothing from you, I only want you. Children should not have to save up to give to their parents. Parents should save to give to their children. ¹⁵So I am happy to give everything I have for you. I will even give myself for you. If I love you more, will you love me less?

¹⁶It is clear that I was not a burden to you. But you think that I was tricky and used lies to catch you. ¹⁷Did I cheat you by using any of the men I sent to you? No, you know I did not. ¹⁸I asked Titus to go to you, and I sent our brother with him. Titus did not cheat you, did he? No, you know that Titus and I did the same thing and with the same spirit.

¹⁹Do you think that we have been defending ourselves to you all this time? We have been speaking in Christ and before God. You are our dear friends, and everything that we do is to make you stronger. ²⁰I do this because I am afraid that when I come, you will not be what I want you to be. And I am afraid that I will not be what you want me to be. I am afraid that among you there may be arguing, jealousy, anger, selfish fighting, evil talk, gossip, pride, and confusion. ²¹I am afraid that when I come to you again, my God will make me humble before you. I may be saddened by many of those who have sinned. I may be saddened because they have not changed their hearts and have not turned away from their sexual sins and from the shameful things they have done.

Final Warnings and Greetings

13 I will come to you for the third time. "For every complaint there must be two or three people to say that they

know it is true.”¹ ²When I was with you the second time, I gave a warning to those who had sinned. Now I am away from you, and I give a warning to all the others. When I come to you again, I will not be easy with them. ³You want proof that Christ is speaking through me. My proof is that he is not weak among you, but he is powerful. ⁴It is true that he was weak when he was killed on the cross. But he lives now by God’s power. It is true that we are weak in Christ. But for you we will be alive in Christ by God’s power.

⁵Look closely at yourselves. Test yourselves to see if you are living in the faith. You know that Christ Jesus is in you—unless you fail the test. ⁶But I hope you will see that we ourselves have not failed the test. ⁷We pray to God that you will not do anything wrong. It is not important to see that we have passed the test. But it is important that you do what is right, even if it seems that we have failed. ⁸We cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. ⁹We are happy to be weak, if you are strong. And we pray that you will grow stronger and stronger. ¹⁰I am writing this while I am away from you. I am writing so that when I come I will not have to be harsh in my use of authority. The Lord gave me this authority to use to make you stronger, not to destroy you.

¹¹Now, brothers, I say good-bye. Try to be perfect. Do what I have asked you to do. Agree with each other, and live in peace. Then the God of love and peace will be with you.

¹²Give each other a holy kiss when you greet each other. ¹³All of God’s holy people send greetings to you.

¹⁴The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

¹ Deuteronomy 19:15.

Galatians

1 From Paul, an apostle.
I was not chosen to be an apostle by men. I was not sent from men. It was Jesus Christ and God the Father who made me an apostle. God is the One who raised Jesus from death.

²This letter is also from all the brothers who are with me.
To the churches in Galatia.

³I pray that God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ will be good to you and give you peace. ⁴Jesus gave himself for our sins to free us from this evil world we live in. This is what God the Father wanted. ⁵The glory belongs to God forever and ever. Amen.

There Is Only One True Good News

⁶A short time ago God called you to follow him. He called you by his grace that came through Christ. But now I am amazed at you! You are already turning away and believing a different "Good News." ⁷Really, there is no other Good News. But some people are confusing you and want to change the Good News of Christ, ⁸which we preached to you. So if we ourselves, or even an angel from heaven, preach to you a different "Good News," he should be condemned! ⁹I said this before. Now I say it again: You have already accepted the Good News. If anyone tells you another way to be saved, he should be condemned!

¹⁰Do you think I am trying to make people accept me? No! God is the One I am trying to please. Am I trying to please

men? If I wanted to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.

Paul's Authority Is from God

¹¹Brothers, I want you to know that the Good News I preached to you was not made by men. ¹²I did not get it from men, nor did any man teach it to me. Jesus Christ showed it to me.

¹³You have heard about my past life. I belonged to the Jewish religion. I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it.

¹⁴I advanced in the Jewish religion beyond most other Jews of my age. I tried harder than anyone else to follow the customs handed down by our ancestors.

¹⁵But God had special plans for me even before I was born. So he called me through his grace that I might ¹⁶tell the Good News about his Son to the non-Jewish people. So God showed me about his Son. When God called me, I did not get advice or help from any man. ¹⁷I did not go to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was. But, without waiting, I went away to Arabia, and later went back to Damascus.

¹⁸After three years I went to Jerusalem to meet Cephas [Peter] and stayed with him for 15 days. ¹⁹I met no other apostles—only James, the brother of the Lord. ²⁰God knows that these things I write are not lies. ²¹Later, I went to the areas of Syria and Cilicia.

²²In Judea the churches in Christ had never met me. ²³They had only heard this about me: “This man was persecuting us, but now he is preaching the same faith that he once tried to destroy.” ²⁴And these believers praised God because of me.

The Other Apostles Accepted Paul

2 After 14 years, I went to Jerusalem again, this time with Barnabas. I also took Titus with me. ²I went because God showed me that I should go. I met with those men [who were leaders]. When we were alone, I told them the Good News I preach to the non-Jewish people. I did not want my past work and the work I am now doing to be wasted. ³Titus was with me, but he was not forced to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. ⁴But some false brothers had come into our group secretly. They came in like spies to find out about the freedom we

have in Christ Jesus. They wanted to make us slaves. ⁵But we did not agree with anything those false brothers wanted! We wanted the truth of the Good News to continue for you.

⁶Those men who seemed to be important did not change the Good News I preach. (It doesn't matter to me if they were "important" or not. To God all men are the same.) ⁷But these leaders saw that God had given me special work, just as he had to Peter. God gave Peter the work of telling the Good News to the Jews. But God gave me the work of telling the Good News to the non-Jewish people. ⁸God gave Peter the power to work as an apostle for the Jewish people, but he also gave me the power to work as an apostle for those who are not Jews. ⁹James, Peter, and John, who seemed to be the leaders, saw that God had given me this special grace. So they accepted Barnabas and me. They said, "Paul and Barnabas, we agree that you should go to the people who are not Jews. We will go to the Jews." ¹⁰They asked us to do only one thing—to remember to help the poor. And this was something that I really wanted to do.

Paul Shows that Peter Was Wrong

¹¹When Peter came to Antioch, I was against him, because he was wrong. ¹²This is what happened: When Peter first came to Antioch, he ate with the non-Jewish people. But then some Jewish men were sent from James. When they arrived, Peter stopped eating with the non-Jewish people and separated himself from them. He was afraid of the Jews who believe that all non-Jewish people must be circumcised. ¹³So Peter was a hypocrite. The other Jewish believers joined with him and were hypocrites, too. Even Barnabas was influenced by what these Jewish believers did. ¹⁴When I saw that they were not following the truth of the Good News, I spoke to Peter in front of them all. I said: "Peter, you are a Jew, but you are not living like a Jew. You are living like the non-Jewish people. So why do you now try to force the non-Jewish people to live like Jews?"^a

¹⁵We were not born as non-Jewish "sinners," but we were born as Jews. ¹⁶Yet we know that a person is not made right with God by following the law. No! It is trusting in Jesus Christ that makes a person right with God. So we, too, have put our faith

^{14a} Some end quotation after verse 21.

in Christ Jesus, that we might be made right with God. And we are right with God because we trusted in Christ—not because we followed the law. For no one can be made right with God by following the law.

¹⁷We Jews came to Christ to be made right with God. So it is clear that we were sinners too. Does this mean that Christ serves the cause of sin? No! ¹⁸But I would really be wrong to begin teaching again those things [the law] that I gave up. ¹⁹I stopped living for the law. It was the law that killed me. I died to the law so that I can now live for God. I [my old life] was killed on the cross with Christ. ²⁰I do not live anymore—it is Christ living in me. I still live in my body, but I live by faith in the Son of God. He loved me and gave himself to save me. ²¹This gift is from God, and it is very important to me. If the law could make us right with God, then Christ did not have to die.

God's Blessing Comes Through Faith

3 You people in Galatia were told very clearly about the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. But you were very foolish. You let someone trick you. ²Tell me this one thing: How did you receive the Spirit? Did you receive the Spirit by following the law? No! You received the Spirit because you heard and believed. ³You began by the Spirit, but now do you try to continue it by your own power? That is foolish. ⁴You have experienced many things. Were all those experiences wasted? I hope not! ⁵Does God give you the Spirit because you follow the law? No! Does God work miracles among you because you follow the law? No! God gives you his Spirit and works miracles among you because you heard and believed.

⁶The Scriptures say the same thing about Abraham: "Abraham believed God; God accepted his faith, and that made him right with God."^a ⁷So you should know that the true children of Abraham are those who have faith. ⁸The Scriptures told what would happen in the future. They said that God would make the non-Jewish people right through their faith. This Good News was told to Abraham beforehand: "God will use you to bless all people on earth."^b ⁹Abraham believed this and because

^{6a} Genesis 15:6. ^{8b} Genesis 12:3.

he believed, he was blessed. All who believe are blessed just as Abraham was blessed. ¹⁰But those who depend on following the law are under a curse because it is written, "Whoever does not always obey what is written in the law is under a curse!" ¹¹So it is clear that no one can be made right with God by the law. "He who is right with God by faith will live." ¹²The law does not use faith. It says, "A person who wants to find life by following these things [the law] must do what the law says." ¹³So the law put a curse on us, but Christ took away that curse. He changed places with us and put himself under that curse. It is written, "Everyone who hangs on a tree," is under a curse." ¹⁴Christ did this so that God's blessing promised to Abraham might come to the non-Jews. This blessing comes through Jesus Christ so that we could have the Spirit that God promised and receive this promise by believing.

The Law and the Promise

¹⁵Brothers, let me give you an example: Think about an agreement that a person makes with another person. After the agreement is made official, no one can stop the agreement or add anything to it. And no one can ignore that agreement. ¹⁶God made promises to Abraham and his Descendant. God did not say, "and to your descendants." That would mean many people. But God said, "and to your Descendant." That means only one person; that person is Christ. ¹⁷This is what I mean: God had an agreement with Abraham and promised to keep it. The law, which came 430 years later, cannot change God's promise to Abraham. ¹⁸Can following the law give us what God promised? No! If this is so, it is not God's promise that brings us the blessings. Instead, God freely gave to Abraham through the promise he had made.

¹⁹So what was the law for? The law was given to show the sins people do. It continued until the special Descendant [Christ] of Abraham came. God's promise was about this Descendant. The law was given through angels by a mediator. ²⁰But a mediator is not needed when there is only one side, and God is one.

^{13a} See Deuteronomy 21:22-23.

The Purpose of the Law of Moses

²¹Does this mean that the law is against God's promises? Never! If there were a law that could give men life, then we could be made right by following that law. ²²But the Scriptures showed that the whole world is bound by sin. This was so that the promise would be given through faith. And it is given to those who believe in Jesus Christ.

²³Before this faith came, we were all held prisoners by the law. We had no freedom until God showed us the way of faith that was coming. ²⁴So the law was our master until Christ came. After Christ came, we could be made right with God through faith. ²⁵Now the way of faith has come, and we no longer live under the law.

²⁶⁻²⁷You were all baptized into Christ, and so you were all clothed with Christ. This shows that you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁸Now, in Christ, there is no difference between Jew and Greek. There is no difference between slaves and free men. There is no difference between male and female. You are all the same in Christ Jesus. ²⁹If you belong to Christ, you are Abraham's descendants, and you get all of God's blessings because of the promise.

4 I want to tell you this: While the heir is still a child, he is no different from a slave. It does not matter that the heir owns everything. ²While he is a child, he must obey those who are chosen to care for him. But when the child reaches the age set by his father, he is free. ³It is the same for us. We were once like children. We were slaves to the useless rules of this world. ⁴But when the right time came, God sent his Son. His Son was born of a woman and lived under the law. ⁵God did this so that he could buy freedom for those who were under the law. His purpose was to make us his children.

⁶And you are God's children. That is why God sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts. The Spirit cries out, "Father, dear Father."^a ⁷So now you are not a slave; you are God's child, and God will give you what he promised, because you are his child.

^{6a} Or *Abba, Father*.

Paul's Love for the Galatian Christians

⁸In the past you did not know God. You were slaves to gods that were not real. ⁹But now you know God. Really, it is God who knows you. So why do you turn back to those weak and useless rules you followed before? Do you want to be slaves to those things again? ¹⁰You still follow teachings about special days, months, seasons, and years. ¹¹I am afraid for you. I fear that my work for you has been wasted.

¹²Brothers, I was like you; so I beg you to become like me. You were very good to me before. ¹³You remember I came to you the first time because I was sick. That was when I preached the Good News to you. ¹⁴Though my sickness was a burden to you, you did not hate me or make me leave. But you welcomed me as an angel from God, as if I were Jesus Christ himself! ¹⁵You were very happy then. Where is that joy now? I remember that you would have taken out your eyes and given them to me if that were possible. ¹⁶Now am I your enemy because I tell you the truth?

¹⁷Those people are working hard to persuade you. But this is not good for you. They want you to follow only them and no one else. ¹⁸It is good for people to show interest in you, but only if their purpose is good. This is always true. It is true when I am with you and when I am away. ¹⁹My little children, again I feel pain for you as a mother feels when she gives birth. I will feel this until you truly become like Christ. ²⁰I wish I could be with you now. Then maybe I could change the way I am talking to you. Now I do not know what to do about you.

The Example of Hagar and Sarah

²¹Some of you still want to be under the law. Tell me, do you know what the law says? ²²The Scriptures say that Abraham had two sons. The mother of one son was a slave woman. The mother of the other son was a free woman. ²³Abraham's son from the slave woman was born in the normal human way. But the son from the free woman was born because of the promise.

²⁴This makes a picture for us. The two women are like the two agreements. One agreement is from Mount Sinai. The people who are under this agreement are like slaves. The mother

named Hagar is like that agreement. ²⁵She is like Mount Sinai in Arabia and is a picture of the earthly city of Jerusalem. This city is a slave, and all its people [the Jews] are slaves. ²⁶But the heavenly Jerusalem which is above is like the free woman. She is our mother. ²⁷It is written:

“Be happy, woman who cannot have children!

You never gave birth.

Shout and cry with joy! You never felt the pain
of giving birth.

The woman who is alone will have more children
than the woman who has a husband.”

Isaiah 54:1

^{28–29}One son was born in the normal way. The other son [Isaac] was born by the power of the Spirit. My brothers, you are also children of promise, as Isaac was then. The son who was born in the normal way persecuted the other son [Isaac]. It is the same today. ³⁰But what does the Scripture say? “Throw out the slave woman and her son! The son of the free woman will receive everything his father has. But the son of the slave woman will receive nothing.”^a ³¹So, my brothers, we are not children of the slave woman. We are children of the free woman.

Keep Your Freedom

5 We have freedom now because Christ made us free. So stand strong. Do not change and go back into slavery. ²Listen! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, then Christ is no good for you. ³Again, I warn every man: If you allow yourselves to be circumcised, then you must follow all the law. ⁴If you try to be made right with God through the law, then your life with Christ is over—you have left God’s grace. ⁵But we hope to be made right with God through faith, and we wait for this hope anxiously with the Spirit’s help. ⁶When we are in Christ Jesus, it is not important if we are circumcised or not. The important thing is faith—the kind of faith that works through love.

⁷You were running a good race. You were obeying the truth. Who stopped you from following the true way? ⁸Whatever way he used did not come from the One who chose you. ⁹“Just a little yeast makes the whole batch of dough rise.” ¹⁰But I trust in

^{30a} Genesis 21:10.

the Lord that you will not believe those different ideas. Someone is confusing you with such ideas. And he will be punished, whoever he is.

¹¹My brothers, I do not teach that a man must be circumcised. If I teach circumcision, then why am I still being persecuted? If I still taught circumcision, my preaching about the cross would not be a problem. ¹²I wish the people who are bothering you would castrate themselves!

¹³My brothers, God called you to be free. But do not use your freedom as an excuse to do the things that please your sinful self.^a Serve each other with love. ¹⁴The whole law is made complete in this one command: "Love your neighbor as you love yourself."^b ¹⁵If you go on hurting each other and tearing each other apart, be careful! You will completely destroy each other.

The Spirit and Human Nature

¹⁶So I tell you: Live by following the Spirit. Then you will not do what your sinful selves^a want. ¹⁷Our sinful selves want what is against the Spirit. The Spirit wants what is against our sinful selves. The two are against each other. So you must not do just what you please. ¹⁸But if you let the Spirit lead you, you are not under the law.

¹⁹The wrong things our sinful self does are clear: being sexually unfaithful, not being pure, doing sexual sins, ²⁰worshipping false gods, doing witchcraft, hating, making trouble, being jealous, being angry, being selfish, making people angry with each other, causing divisions, ²¹having envy, being drunk, having wild and wasteful parties, and doing other things like this. I warn you now as I warned you before: Those who do these things will not be in God's kingdom. ²²But the Spirit gives love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control. There is no law against these things. ²⁴Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified their own sinful selves. They have given up their old selfish feelings and the evil things they wanted to do. ²⁵We get our new life from the Spirit. So we should follow the Spirit. ²⁶We must not be proud. We must not make trouble with each other. And we must not be jealous of each other.

13, 16^a Or *flesh*; also in verses 17, 19, and 24. 14^b Leviticus 19:18.

Help Each Other

6 Brothers, if a person is trapped in some sin, you who are spiritual help make him right again. You should do this in a gentle way. But be careful! You might be tempted to sin, too. ²Help each other with troubles. When you do this, you truly obey the law of Christ. ³If anyone thinks that he is important when he is really not important, he is only fooling himself. ⁴He should not compare himself with others. Each person should judge his own actions. Then he can be proud for what he himself has done. ⁵Each person must be responsible for himself.

⁶Anyone who is learning the teaching of God should share all the good things he has with his teacher.

Life Is Like Planting a Field

⁷Do not be misled: You cannot fool God. A person harvests only what he plants. ⁸If he plants to satisfy his sinful self,^a his sinful self will bring him eternal death. But if he plants to please the Spirit, he will receive eternal life from the Spirit. ⁹We must not become tired of doing good. We will receive our harvest at the right time if we do not give up! ¹⁰When we have the opportunity to help anyone, we should do it. But we should especially help those who are in the family of believers.

Paul Ends His Letter

¹¹I am writing this myself. See what large letters I use. ¹²Some men are trying to force you to be circumcised. They do this so they will look good. They are afraid that they will be persecuted if they follow only the cross of Christ. ¹³Those who are circumcised do not obey the law themselves, but they want you to be circumcised. Then they can boast about what they forced you to do. ¹⁴I hope I will never boast about things like that. The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ is my only reason for boasting. Through the cross of Jesus my world was crucified and I died to the world. ¹⁵It is not important if a man is circumcised or not circumcised. The important thing is being the new people God has made. ¹⁶Peace and mercy to those who follow this rule—to all of God's people.

^{8a} Or *flesh*.

¹⁷So do not give me any more trouble. I have scars on my body that show I belong to Christ Jesus.

¹⁸My brothers, I pray that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ will be with your spirit. Amen.

Ephesians

1 From Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus. I am an apostle because that is what God wanted.

To God's holy people living in Ephesus,^a believers in Christ Jesus.

²Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Spiritual Blessings in Christ

³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Christ, God has given us every spiritual blessing in heaven. ⁴In Christ, he chose us before the world was made. In his love he chose us to be his holy people without blame before him. ⁵And before the world was made, God decided to make us his own children through Jesus Christ. That was what he wanted and what pleased him. ⁶This brings praise to God because of his wonderful grace. God gave that grace to us freely, in the One he loves. ⁷In Christ we are made free by his blood [death]. And so we have forgiveness of sins because of God's rich grace. ⁸God gave us that grace fully and freely. God, with full wisdom and understanding, ⁹let us know his secret purpose. This was what God wanted, and he planned to do it through Christ. ¹⁰His goal was to carry out his plan when the right time came. He planned that all things in heaven and on earth would be joined together in Christ as the head.

¹¹In Christ we were chosen to be God's people. God had already chosen us to be his people, because that is what he

^{1a} Some early Greek copies omit *living in Ephesus*.

wanted. And God is the One who makes everything agree with what he decides and wants. ¹²We are the first people who hoped in Christ. And we were chosen so that we would bring praise to God's glory. ¹³So it is with you. You heard the true teaching—the Good News about your salvation. When you heard it, you believed in Christ. And in Christ, God put his special mark on you by giving you the Holy Spirit that he had promised. ¹⁴That Holy Spirit is the guarantee that we will get what God promised for his people. This will bring full freedom to those who belong to God, to bring praise to God's glory.

Paul's Prayer

^{15–16}That is why I always remember you in my prayers and always thank God for you. I have always done this since the time I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people. ¹⁷I always pray to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ—to the glorious Father. I pray that he will give you a spirit that will make you wise in the knowledge of God—the knowledge that he has shown you. ¹⁸I pray that you will have greater understanding in your heart. Then you will know the hope that God has chosen to give us. You will know that the blessings God has promised his holy people are rich and glorious. ¹⁹And you will know that God's power is very great for us who believe. That power is the same as the great strength ²⁰God used to raise Christ from death and put him at his right side in heaven. ²¹God made Christ more important than all rulers, authorities, powers, and kings. Christ is more important than anything in this world or in the next world. ²²God put everything under his power. And God made him the head over everything for the church. ²³The church is Christ's body. The church is filled with Christ and Christ fills everything in every way.

From Death to Life

2 In the past your spiritual lives were dead because of your sins and the things you did wrong against God. ²In the past you lived the way the world lives. You followed the ruler of the evil powers that are above the earth. That same spirit is now working in those who refuse to obey God. ³In the past all of us

lived like them. We lived trying to please our sinful selves.^a We did what our bodies and minds wanted. We should have suffered God's anger because of the way we were. We were the same as all other people.

⁴But God's mercy is great, and he loved us very much. ⁵We were dead because of the things we did wrong against God. But God gave us new life with Christ. You have been saved by God's grace. ⁶And he raised us up with Christ and gave us a seat with him in the heavens. He did this for those of us who are in Christ Jesus. ⁷He did this so that for all future time he could show the very great riches of his grace. He shows that grace by being kind to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸I mean that you are saved by grace, and you got that grace by believing. You did not save yourselves. It was a gift from God. ⁹You cannot boast that you are saved by the work you have done. ¹⁰God has made us what we are. In Christ Jesus, God made us new people so that we would do good works. God had planned in advance those good works for us. He had planned for us to live our lives doing them.

One in Christ

¹¹You were born non-Jews. You are the people the Jews call "uncircumcised." Those who call you "uncircumcised" call themselves "circumcised." (Their circumcision is only something they themselves do on their bodies.) ¹²Remember that in the past you were without Christ. You were not citizens of Israel. And you had no part in the agreements with the promise. You had no hope, and you did not know God. ¹³At one time you were far away from God. But now in Christ Jesus you are brought near to God through the blood [death] of Christ. ¹⁴Because of Christ we now have peace. Christ made us both [Jews and non-Jews] one people. The Jews and the non-Jews were separated as if there were a wall between them. But Christ broke down that wall of hate by giving his own body. ¹⁵The Jewish law had many commandments and rules, but Christ ended that law. Christ's purpose was to make the two groups of people [Jew and non-Jew] become one new people in him. By doing this Christ would make peace. ¹⁶Through the cross Christ ended the

^{3a} Or *flesh*.

hatred between the two groups. And after the two groups became one body, Christ wanted to bring them both back to God. Christ did this with his death on the cross. ¹⁷Christ came and preached peace to you [non-Jews] who were far away from God. And he preached peace to those [Jews] who were near to God. ¹⁸Yes, through Christ we all have the right to come to the Father in one Spirit.

¹⁹So now you non-Jews are not visitors or strangers. Now you are citizens together with God's holy people. You belong to God's family. ²⁰You believers are like a building that God owns. That building was built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Christ Jesus himself is the most important stone^a in that building. ²¹That whole building is joined together in Christ who makes it grow and become a holy temple in the Lord. ²²And in Christ you, too, are being built together with the other people [the Jews]. You are being built into a place where God lives through the Spirit.

Paul's Work for the Non-Jews

3 So I, Paul, am a prisoner of Christ Jesus. I am a prisoner for you who are not Jews. ²Surely you know that God gave me this work through his grace to help you. ³God let me know his secret plan. He showed it to me. I have already written a little about this. ⁴And if you read what I wrote, then you can see that I truly understand the secret truth about the Christ.^b ⁵People who lived in other times were not told that secret truth. But now, through the Spirit, God has shown that secret truth to his holy apostles and prophets. ⁶The secret truth is that the non-Jews will receive what God has for his people, just as the Jews will. The non-Jews are together with the Jews as part of the same body. They share together in the promise that God made in Christ Jesus. The non-Jews have all of this because of the Good News.

⁷By God's special gift of grace, I became a servant to tell that Good News. God gave me that grace through his power. ⁸I am the least important of all God's people. But God gave me this gift—to tell the non-Jewish people the Good News about the riches of Christ. Those riches are too great to understand fully.

^{20a} Or *cornerstone*. ^{4b} Or *Messiah*.

⁹And God gave me the work of telling all people about the plan for God's secret truth. That secret truth has been hidden in God since the beginning of time. God is the One who created everything. ¹⁰His purpose was that through the church all the rulers and powers in the heavenly world will now know God's wisdom, which has so many forms. ¹¹This agrees with the purpose God had since the beginning of time. And God carried out his plan through Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹²In Christ we can come before God with freedom and without fear. We can do this through faith in Christ. ¹³So I ask you not to become discouraged because of my sufferings for you. My sufferings bring honor to you.

The Love of Christ

¹⁴So I bow in prayer before the Father. ¹⁵Every family in heaven and on earth gets its true name from him. ¹⁶I ask the Father in his great glory to give you the power to be strong in spirit. And he will give you that strength through his Spirit. ¹⁷I pray that Christ will live in your hearts because of your faith. I pray that your life will be strong in love and be built on love. ¹⁸And I pray that you and all God's holy people will have the power to understand the greatness of Christ's love. I pray that you can understand how wide and how long and how high and how deep that love is. ¹⁹Christ's love is greater than any person can ever know. But I pray that you will be able to know that love. Then you can be filled with the fullness of God.

²⁰With God's power working in us, God can do much, much more than anything we can ask or think of. ²¹To him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus for all time, forever and ever. Amen.

The Unity of the Body

4 I am in prison because I belong to the Lord. God chose you to be his people, and I tell you now to live the way God's people should live. ²Always be humble and gentle. Be patient and accept each other with love. ³You are joined together with peace through the Spirit. Do all you can to continue together in this way. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit. And God called you to have one hope. ⁵There is one Lord, one faith, and one

baptism. ⁶There is one God and Father of everything. He rules everything. He is everywhere and in everything.

⁷Christ gave each one of us a special gift. Each one received what Christ wanted to give him. ⁸That is why it^a says:

“When he went up high into the sky;
he took prisoners with him,
and he gave gifts to men.”

Psalms 68:18

⁹When it says, “He went up,” what does it mean? It means that he first came down to the earth. ¹⁰So Jesus came down, and he is the same One who went up. He went up above all the sky. Christ did that to fill everything with himself. ¹¹And Christ gave gifts to men—he made some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to go and tell the Good News, and some to have the work of caring for and teaching God’s people. ¹²Christ gave those gifts to prepare God’s holy people for the work of serving. He gave those gifts to make the body of Christ stronger ¹³until we are all joined together in the same faith and in the same knowledge about the Son of God. We must become like a mature person—we must grow until we become like Christ and have all his perfection.

¹⁴Then we will no longer be babies. We will not be tossed about like a ship that the waves carry one way and then another. We will not be influenced by every new teaching we hear from men who are trying to fool us. Those men make plans and try any kind of trick to fool people into following the wrong path. ¹⁵No! We will speak the truth with love. We will grow up in every way to be like Christ, who is the head. ¹⁶The whole body depends on Christ. All the parts of the body are joined and held together. Each part does its own work. And this makes the whole body grow and be strong with love.

The Way You Should Live

¹⁷In the Lord’s name, I tell you this. I warn you: Do not continue living like those who do not believe. Their thoughts are worth nothing. ¹⁸They do not understand. They know nothing, because they refuse to listen. So they cannot have the life that God gives. ¹⁹They have lost their feeling of shame and use their

^a Or *he*.

lives for doing evil. More and more they want to do all kinds of evil things. ²⁰But the things you learned in Christ were not like this. ²¹I know that you heard about him, and you are in him; so you were taught the truth. Yes, the truth is in Jesus. ²²You were taught to leave your old self—to stop living the evil way you lived before. That old self becomes worse and worse, because people are fooled by the evil things they want to do. ²³But you were taught to be made new in your hearts. ²⁴You were taught to become a new person. That new person is made to be like God—made to be truly good and holy.

²⁵So you must stop telling lies. You must always speak the truth to each other, because we all belong to each other in the same body. ²⁶When you become angry, do not let that anger make you sin. And do not continue being angry all day. ²⁷Do not give the devil a way to defeat you. ²⁸If anyone is stealing, he must stop stealing and start working. He must use his hands for doing something good. Then he will have something to share with those who are poor.

²⁹When you talk, do not say harmful things. But say what people need—words that will help others become stronger. Then what you say will help those who listen to you. ³⁰And do not make the Holy Spirit sad. The Spirit is God's proof that you belong to him. God gave you the Spirit to show that God will make you free when the time comes. ³¹Do not be bitter or angry or mad. Never shout angrily or say things to hurt others. Never do anything evil. ³²Be kind and loving to each other. Forgive each other just as God forgave you in Christ.

Living in the Light

5 You are God's children whom he loves. So try to be like God. ²Live a life of love. Love other people just as Christ loved us. Christ gave himself for us—he was a sweet-smelling offering and sacrifice to God.

³But there must be no sexual sin among you. There must not be any kind of evil or greed. Those things are not right for God's holy people. ⁴Also, there must be no evil talk among you. You must not speak foolishly or tell evil jokes. These things are not right for you. But you should be giving thanks to God. ⁵You can be sure of this: No one will have a place in the kingdom of

Christ and of God if he does sexual sins, or does evil things, or is greedy. Anyone who is greedy is serving a false god.

⁶Do not let anyone fool you by telling you things that are not true. These things will bring God's anger on those who do not obey him. ⁷So have no part with them. ⁸In the past you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. So live like children who belong to the light. ⁹Light brings every kind of goodness, right living, and truth. ¹⁰Try to learn what pleases the Lord. ¹¹Do not do the things that people in darkness do. That brings nothing good. But show that the things done in darkness are wrong. ¹²It is shameful even to talk about what those people do in secret. ¹³But the light makes all things easy to see. ¹⁴And everything that is made easy to see can become light. This is why it is said:

“Wake up, sleeper!
Rise from death,
and Christ will shine on you.”

¹⁵So be very careful how you live. Do not live like those who are not wise, but live wisely. ¹⁶I mean that you should use every chance you have for doing good, because these are evil times. ¹⁷So do not be foolish, but learn what the Lord wants you to do. ¹⁸Do not be drunk with wine. That will ruin you spiritually. But be filled with the Spirit. ¹⁹Speak to each other with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your hearts to the Lord. ²⁰Always give thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Wives and Husbands

²¹Be willing to obey each other. Do this because you respect Christ.

²²Wives, be under the authority of your husbands, as of the Lord. ²³The husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church. The church is Christ's body—and he is the Savior of the body. ²⁴The church is under the authority of Christ. So it is the same with you wives. You should be under the authority of your husbands in everything.

²⁵Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church. He died for the church ²⁶to make it holy. He used the word to make the church clean by washing it with water. ²⁷Christ died so that

he could give the church to himself in all its beauty. He died so that the church could be pure and without fault, with no evil or sin or any other wrong thing in it. ²⁸And husbands should love their wives in the same way. They should love their wives as they love their own bodies. The man who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹No person ever hates his own body, but feeds and takes care of it. And that is what Christ does for the church, ³⁰because we are parts of his body. ³¹"So a man will leave his father and mother and join his wife. And the two will become one body."^a ³²That secret truth is very important—I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³But each one of you must love his wife as he loves himself. And a wife must respect her husband.

Children and Parents

6 Children, obey your parents the way the Lord wants. This is the right thing to do. ²The commandment says, "You must honor your father and mother."^b This is the first commandment that has a promise with it. ³The promise is: "Then everything will be well with you, and you will have a long life on the earth."^c

⁴Fathers, do not make your children angry, but raise them with the training and teaching of the Lord.

Slaves and Masters

⁵Slaves, obey your masters here on earth with fear and respect. And do that with a heart that is true, just as you obey Christ. ⁶You must do more than just obey your masters to please them while they are watching you. You must obey them as you obey Christ, doing what God wants with all your heart. ⁷Do your work, and be happy to do it. Work as if you were serving the Lord, not as if you were serving only men. ⁸Remember that the Lord will give a reward to everyone, slave or free, for doing good.

⁹Masters, in the same way, be good to your slaves. Do not threaten them. You know that the One who is your Master and their Master is in heaven, and he treats everyone alike.

^{31a} Genesis 2:24. ^{2b} Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16. ^{3c} Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16.

Wear the Full Armor of God

¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his great power. ¹¹Wear the full armor of God so that you can fight against the devil's evil tricks. ¹²Our fight is not against people on earth. We are fighting against the rulers and authorities and the powers of this world's darkness. We are fighting against the spiritual powers of evil in the heavenly world. ¹³That is why you need to get God's full armor. Then on the day of evil you will be able to stand strong. And when you have finished the whole fight, you will still be standing. ¹⁴So stand strong, with the belt of truth tied around your waist. On your chest wear the protection of right living. ¹⁵And on your feet wear the Good News of peace to help you stand strong. ¹⁶Also use the shield of faith. With that you can stop all the burning arrows of the Evil One. ¹⁷Accept God's salvation to be your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit—that sword is the teaching of God. ¹⁸Pray in the Spirit at all times. Pray with all kinds of prayers, and ask for everything you need. With this in mind you must always be ready and never give up. Always pray for all God's people.

¹⁹Also pray for me. Pray that when I speak, God will give me words so that I can tell the secret truth of the Good News without fear. ²⁰I am an ambassador for that work here in prison. Pray that when I preach that Good News I will speak without fear, as I should.

Final Greetings

²¹I am sending to you Tychicus, our brother whom we love. He is a faithful servant of the Lord's work. He will tell you everything that is happening with me. Then you will know how I am and what I am doing. ²²That is why I am sending him. I want you to know how we are. And I am sending him to encourage you.

²³Peace and love with faith to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴God's grace to all of you who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love that never ends.

Philippians

1 From Paul and Timothy, servants of Jesus Christ.
To all of God's holy people in Christ Jesus who live in Philippi. And to your elders and deacons.

²Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul's Prayer

³I thank God every time I remember you. ⁴And I always pray for all of you with joy. ⁵I thank God for the help you gave me while I preached the Good News. You helped from the first day you believed until now. ⁶God began doing a good work in you. And he will continue it until it is finished when Jesus Christ comes again. I am sure of that.

⁷And I know that I am right to think like this about all of you because I have you in my heart. All of you share in God's grace with me, both while I am in prison and while I am defending and proving the truth of the Good News. ⁸God knows that I want to see you very much. I love all of you with the love of Christ Jesus.

⁹This is my prayer for you:

that your love will grow more and more;
that you will have knowledge and understanding
with your love;

¹⁰that you will be able to choose what is good;
that you will be pure and without wrong for the
coming of Christ;

¹¹that you will do many good things with the help of Christ to bring glory and praise to God.

Paul's Troubles Help the Lord's Work

¹²Brothers, I want you to know that what has happened to me has helped to spread the Good News. ¹³I am in prison because I am a believer in Christ. All the palace guards^a and everyone else clearly know this. ¹⁴My being in prison has caused most of the believers to have more confidence. And so they are much braver about telling the Good News about Christ.

¹⁵It is true that some preach about Christ because they are jealous and bitter. But others preach about Christ because they want to help. ¹⁶They preach because they have love, and they know that God gave me the work of defending the Good News. ¹⁷But others preach about Christ because they are selfish. Their reason for preaching is wrong. They want to make trouble for me in prison.

¹⁸But I do not care if they make trouble for me. The important thing is that they are preaching about Christ. They should do it for the right reasons, but I am happy even if they do it for wrong reasons. And I will continue to be happy. ¹⁹You are praying for me, and the Spirit of Jesus Christ helps me. So I know that this trouble will bring my freedom.^b ²⁰The thing I want and hope for is that I will not fail Christ in anything. I hope that I will have the courage now, as always, to show the greatness of Christ in my life here on earth. I want to do that if I die or if I live. ²¹To me the only important thing about living is Christ. And even death would be profit for me. ²²If I continue living in the body, my work will have good results for the Lord. But what shall I choose? I do not know. ²³It is hard to choose between the two. I want to leave this life and be with Christ. That is much better. ²⁴But you need me here in my body. ²⁵I know that you need me, and so I know that I will stay with you. I will help you grow and have joy in your faith. ²⁶You will be very happy in Christ Jesus when I am with you again.

²⁷Be sure that you live in a way that brings honor to the Good News of Christ. Then whether I come and visit you or am away

^{13a} Or whole palace. ^{19b} Or salvation.

from you, I will hear that you continue strong with one purpose and that you work together as a team for the faith of the Good News. ²⁸And you will not be afraid of those who are against you. All of these things are proof from God that you will be saved and that your enemies will be lost. ²⁹God gave you the honor both of believing in Christ and suffering for Christ. Both these things bring glory to Christ. ³⁰When I was with you, you saw the struggles I had, and you hear about the struggles I am having now. You yourselves are having the same kind of struggles.

Be United and Care for Each Other

2 Does your life in Christ give you strength? Does his love comfort you? Do we share together in the Spirit? Do you have mercy and kindness? ²If so, make me very happy by having the same thoughts, sharing the same love, and having one mind and purpose. ³Do nothing from a selfish spirit or pride that causes you to boast. Be humble and give more honor to others than to yourselves. ⁴Do not be interested only in your own life, but be interested in the lives of others.

Learn from Christ to be Unselfish

⁵In your lives you must think and act like Christ Jesus.

⁶Christ himself was like God in everything. He was equal with God. But he did not think that being equal with God was something to be held on to.

⁷Instead, he made himself nothing. He was born to be a man and became like a servant. ⁸And when he was living as a man, he humbled himself and was obedient to death—even death on a cross.

⁹So God raised Christ to the highest place. God made the name of Christ greater than every other name. ¹⁰God wants every knee to bow at the name of Jesus—everyone in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. ¹¹Everyone will confess, “Jesus Christ is Lord” and bring glory to God the Father.

Be the People God Wants You to Be

¹²My dear friends, you have always obeyed. You obeyed God when I was with you, but it is even more important that you

obey now while I am not with you. Keep on working to complete your salvation, and do it with fear and trembling. ¹³Yes, God is working in you to help you want to do what pleases him. And He gives you the power to do it.

¹⁴Do everything without complaining or arguing. ¹⁵Then you will be innocent and without anything wrong in you. You will be God's children without fault. But you are living with crooked and mean people all around you. Among them you shine like stars in the dark world. ¹⁶You offer to them the teaching that gives life. So when Christ comes again, I can be happy because my work was not wasted. I ran in the race and won.

¹⁷Your faith makes you offer your lives as a sacrifice in serving God. Perhaps I will have to offer my own blood with your sacrifice. But if that happens, I will be happy and full of joy with all of you. ¹⁸You also should be happy and full of joy with me.

News About Timothy and Epaphroditus

¹⁹I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon. I will be happy to learn how you are. ²⁰I have no one like Timothy. He truly cares for you. ²¹Other people are interested only in their own lives. They are not interested in the work of Christ Jesus. ²²You know the kind of person Timothy is. You know that he has served with me in telling the Good News as a son serves his father. ²³I plan to send him to you quickly when I know what will happen to me. ²⁴I am sure that the Lord will help me to come to you soon.

²⁵Epaphroditus is my brother in Christ. He works and serves with me in the army of Christ. When I needed help, you sent him to me. I think now that I must send him back to you ²⁶because he wants very much to see all of you. He is worried because you heard that he was sick. ²⁷Yes, he was sick and near death. But God helped him and me too, so that I would not have more sadness. ²⁸So I want very much to send him to you. When you see him, you can be happy, and I can stop worrying about you. ²⁹Welcome him in the Lord with much joy. Give honor to people like Epaphroditus. ³⁰He should be honored because he almost died for the work of Christ. He put his life in danger so that he could help me. This was help that you could not give me.

Christ Is More Important than Anything Else

3 My brothers, be full of joy in the Lord. It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it will help you to be more ready. ²Be careful of those who do evil. They are like dogs. They demand to cut the body. ³But we are the ones who are truly circumcised. We worship God through his Spirit. We are proud to be in Christ Jesus, and we do not trust in ourselves or anything we can do. ⁴Even if I am able to trust in myself, still I do not. If anyone thinks that he has a reason to trust in himself, he should know that I have greater reason for trusting in myself. ⁵I was circumcised eight days after my birth. I am from the people of Israel and the family group of Benjamin. I am a Hebrew, and my parents were Hebrews. The law was very important to me. That is why I became a Pharisee. ⁶I was so enthusiastic that I tried to persecute the church. No one could find fault with the way I obeyed the law. ⁷At one time all these things were important to me, but now I think they are worth nothing because of Christ. ⁸Not only those things, but I think that all things are worth nothing compared with the greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. Because of Christ, I have lost all those things, and now I know that they are worthless trash. This allows me to have Christ ⁹and to be in him. In Christ, I am right with God and this being right does not come from my following the law. It comes from God through faith. And God uses my faith in Christ to make me right with him. ¹⁰All I want is to know Christ and the power of his rising from death. I want to share in Christ's sufferings and become like him in his death. ¹¹If I have those things, then I have hope that I myself will be raised from death.

We Must Continue Trying to Reach Our Goal

¹²I do not mean that I am already as God wants me to be. I have not yet reached that goal. But I continue trying to reach it and to make it mine. Christ wants me to do this. This is the reason Christ made me his. ¹³Brothers, I know that I have not yet reached that goal. But there is one thing I always do: I forget the things that are past. I try as hard as I can to reach the goal that is before me. ¹⁴I keep trying to reach the goal and get

the prize. That prize is mine because God called me through Christ to the life above.

¹⁵All of us who have grown spiritually to be mature should think this way too. And if there are things you do not agree with, God will make them clear to you. ¹⁶But we should continue following what we already have.

¹⁷Brothers, all of you should try to follow my example, and to copy those who live the way we showed you. ¹⁸Many people live like enemies of the cross of Christ. I have often told you about them, and it makes me cry to tell you about them now. ¹⁹The way they live is leading them to destruction. Their stomach is their god. They do shameful things, and they are proud of it. They think only about earthly things. ²⁰But our homeland is in heaven, and we are waiting for our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, to come from heaven. ²¹He will change our humble bodies and make them like his own glorious body. Christ can do this by his power. With that power he is able to rule all things.

Paul Tells the Philippian Christians Some Things to Do

4 My dear brothers, I love you and want to see you. You bring me joy and make me proud of you. Continue following the Lord as I have told you.

²I ask Euodia and Syntyche to agree in the Lord. ³And because you serve faithfully with me, my friend, I ask you to help these women to do this. They served with me in telling the Good News. They served together with Clement and others who worked with me, whose names are written in the book of life.

⁴Be full of joy in the Lord always. I will say again, be full of joy.

⁵Let all men see that you are gentle and kind. The Lord is coming soon. ⁶Do not worry about anything, but pray and ask God for everything you need. When you pray, always give thanks. ⁷And God's peace will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. The peace that God gives is so great that we cannot understand it.

⁸Brothers, continue to think about the things that are good and worthy of praise. Think about the things that are true and

honorable and right and pure and beautiful and respected. ⁹Do what you learned and received from me. Do what I told you and what you saw me do. And the God who gives peace will be with you.

Paul Thanks the Philippian Christians for a Gift

¹⁰I am very happy in the Lord that you have shown your care for me again. You continued to care about me, but there was no way for you to show it. ¹¹I am telling you this, but it is not because I need anything. I have learned to be satisfied with the things I have and with everything that happens. ¹²I know how to live when I am poor, and I know how to live when I have plenty. I have learned the secret of being happy at any time in everything that happens. I have learned to be happy when I have enough to eat and when I do not have enough to eat. I have learned to be happy when I have all that I need and when I do not have the things I need. ¹³I can do all things through Christ, because he gives me strength.

¹⁴But it was good that you helped me when I needed help. ¹⁵You people in Philippi remember when I first preached the Good News. When I left Macedonia, you were the only church that gave me help. ¹⁶Several times you sent me things I needed when I was in Thessalonica. ¹⁷Really, it is not that I want to receive gifts from you. But I want you to have the good that comes from giving. ¹⁸And now I have everything, and more. I have all I need because Epaphroditus brought your gift to me. Your gift is like a sweet-smelling sacrifice offered to God. God accepts that sacrifice and it pleases him. ¹⁹My God, who is very rich in Christ Jesus, will use his riches to give you everything you need. ²⁰Glory to our God and Father forever and ever! Amen.

²¹Greet each of God's people in Christ. God's people who are with me send greetings to you. ²²All of God's people greet you. And those believers from Caesar's palace greet you, too.

²³The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Colossians

1 From Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus. I am an apostle because that is what God wanted.

Also from Timothy, our brother.

²To the holy and faithful brothers in Christ that live in Colossae. Grace and peace from God our Father.

³In our prayers for you we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴We thank God because we have heard about the faith you have in Christ Jesus and the love you have for all of God's people. ⁵You have this faith and love because of your hope, and what you hope for is saved for you in heaven. You learned about this hope when you heard the true teaching, the Good News ⁶that was told to you. Everywhere in the world that Good News is bringing blessings and is growing. This has happened with you, too, since you heard the Good News and understood the truth about the grace of God. ⁷You learned about God's grace from Epaphras, whom we love. Epaphras works together with us, and is a faithful servant of Christ for us. ⁸He also told us about the love you have in the Holy Spirit.

⁹Since the day we heard this about you, we have continued praying for you. We pray:

that you will know fully what God wants;

that with your knowledge you will also have great wisdom

and understanding in spiritual things;

¹⁰that you will live the kind of life that honors and pleases the Lord in every way;

that you will produce fruit in every good work and
grow in
the knowledge of God;

¹¹ that God will strengthen you with his own great
power;

so that you will not give up when troubles come,
and that you will be patient and joyful.

¹² Then you will give thanks to the Father. He has made you
able to have all that he has prepared for his people who live in
the light. ¹³ God made us free from the power of darkness, and
he brought us into the kingdom of his dear Son. ¹⁴ The Son paid
for our sins, and in him we have forgiveness.

When We Look at Christ, We See God

¹⁵ No one has seen God, but Jesus is exactly like him. Christ
ranks higher than all the things that have been made. ¹⁶ Through
his power all things were made—things in heaven and on earth,
things seen and unseen, all powers, authorities, lords, and
rulers. All things were made through Christ and for Christ.

¹⁷ Christ was there before anything was made. And all things
continue because of him. ¹⁸ He is the head of the body. (The
body is the church.) Everything comes from him. And he is the
Lord^a who was raised from death. So in all things Jesus is most
important. ¹⁹ God was pleased for all of himself to live in Christ.
²⁰ And through Christ, God decided to bring all things back
to himself again—things on earth and things in heaven. God
made peace by using Christ's blood [death] on the cross.

²¹ At one time you were separated from God. You were God's
enemies in your minds, because the evil deeds you did were
against God. ²² But now Christ has made you God's friends
again. He did this by his death while he was in the body, that
he might bring you into God's presence. He brings you before
God as people who are holy, with no wrong in you, and with
nothing that God can judge you guilty of. ²³ And Christ will do
this if you continue to believe in the Good News you heard.
You must continue strong and sure in your faith. You must not
be moved away from the hope that Good News gave you. That

^{18a} Or the firstborn.

same Good News has been told to everyone in the world. I, Paul, help in preaching that Good News.

Paul's Work for the Church

²⁴I am happy in my sufferings for you. There are many things that Christ must still suffer through his body, the church. I am accepting my part of these things that must be suffered. I accept these sufferings in my body. I suffer for his body, the church. ²⁵I became a servant of the church because God gave me a special work to do that helps you. My work is to tell fully the teaching of God. ²⁶This teaching is the secret truth that was hidden since the beginning of time. It was hidden from everyone, but now it is made known to God's holy people. ²⁷God decided to let his people know this rich and glorious truth which he has for all people. This truth is Christ himself, who is in you. He is our only hope for glory. ²⁸So we continue to preach Christ to all men. We use all wisdom to warn and to teach everyone. We are trying to bring each one into God's presence as a mature person in Christ. ²⁹To do this, I work and struggle, using Christ's great strength that works so powerfully in me.

2 I want you to know that I am trying very hard to help you and those in Laodicea and others who have never seen me. ²I want them to be strengthened and joined together with love. I want them to be rich in the strong belief that comes from understanding. I mean I want you to know fully God's secret truth. That truth is Christ himself. ³And in him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are safely kept.

⁴I say this so that no one can mislead you by winning arguments. ⁵I am not there with you, but my heart is with you. I am happy to see your good lives and your strong faith in Christ.

Continue to Live in Christ

⁶As you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so continue to live in him. ⁷Keep your roots deep in him and have your lives built on him. Be strong in the faith, just as you were taught. And always be thankful.

⁸Be sure that no one leads you away with false ideas and words that mean nothing. Those ideas come from men. They

are the worthless ideas of this world. They are not from Christ.⁹ All of God lives in Christ fully (even when Christ was on earth).¹⁰ And in him you have a full and true life. He is ruler over all rulers and powers.

¹¹In Christ you had a different kind of circumcision. That circumcision was not done by hands. I mean, you were made free from the power of your sinful self.^a That is the kind of circumcision Christ performs.¹² When you were baptized, you were buried with Christ, and you were raised up with Christ because of your faith in God's power. That power was shown when he raised Christ from death.¹³ You were spiritually dead because of your sins and because you were not free from the power of your sinful self. But God made you alive with Christ. And God forgave all our sins.¹⁴ We owed a debt because we broke God's laws. That debt listed all the rules we failed to follow. But God forgave us that debt. He took away that debt and nailed it to the cross.¹⁵ God defeated the spiritual rulers and powers. With the cross God won the victory and defeated them. He showed the world that they were powerless.

Don't Follow Teachings and Rules that Men Make

¹⁶So do not let anyone make rules for you about eating and drinking or about a religious feast, a new moon celebration, or a Sabbath day.¹⁷ In the past, these things were like a shadow of what was to come. But the new things that were coming are found in Christ.¹⁸ Some enjoy acting as if they were humble and love to worship angels. They are always talking about the visions they have seen. Do not let them tell you that you are wrong. They are full of foolish pride because of their human way of thinking.¹⁹ They do not keep themselves under the control of the head [Christ]. The whole body depends on Christ. Because of him all the parts of the body care for each other and help each other. This strengthens the body and holds it together. And so the body grows in the way God wants.

²⁰You died with Christ and were made free from the worthless rules of the world. So why do you act as if you still belong to this world? I mean, why do you follow rules like these:

²¹"Don't handle this," "Don't taste that," "Don't touch that

^{11a} Or *flesh*; also in verses 13 and 23.

thing"? ²²These rules are talking about earthly things that are gone as soon as they are used. They are only man-made commands and teachings. ²³These rules seem to be wise. But they are only part of a man-made religion that makes people pretend to be humble and makes them punish their bodies. They do not really control the evil desires of the sinful self.

Your New Life in Christ

3 You were raised from death with Christ. So aim at what is in heaven, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. ²Think only about the things in heaven, not the things on earth. ³Your old sinful self has died, and your new life is kept with Christ in God. ⁴Christ is your life. When he comes again, you will share in his glory.

⁵So put all evil things out of your life: sexual sinning, doing evil, letting evil thoughts control you, wanting things that are evil, and always selfishly wanting more and more. This really means living to serve a false god. ⁶These things make God angry.^a ⁷In your evil life in the past, you also did these things.

⁸But now put them out of your life: anger, bad temper, doing or saying things to hurt others, and using evil words when you talk. ⁹Do not lie to each other. You have left your old sinful life and the things you did before. ¹⁰You have begun to live the new life. In your new life you are being made new. You are becoming like the One who made you. This new life brings you the true knowledge of God. ¹¹In the new life there is no difference between Greeks and Jews. There is no difference between those who are circumcised and those who are not circumcised, or people that are foreigners, or Scythians. There is no difference between slaves and free people. But Christ is in all believers, and Christ is all that is important.

¹²God has chosen you and made you his holy people. He loves you. So always do these things: Show mercy to others; be kind, humble, gentle, and patient. ¹³Do not be angry with each other, but forgive each other. If someone does wrong to you, then forgive him. Forgive each other because the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴Do all these things; but most importantly, love each other. Love is what holds you all together in perfect unity. ¹⁵Let

^{6a} Some Greek copies add: *against the people who do not obey God.*

the peace that Christ gives control your thinking. You were all called together in one body to have peace. Always be thankful. ¹⁶Let the teaching of Christ live in you richly. Use all wisdom to teach and strengthen each other. Sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷Everything you say and everything you do should all be done for Jesus your Lord. And in all you do, give thanks to God the Father through Jesus.

Your New Life with Other People

¹⁸Wives, be under the authority of your husbands. This is the right thing to do in the Lord.

¹⁹Husbands, love your wives, and be gentle to them.

²⁰Children, obey your parents in all things. This pleases the Lord.

²¹Fathers, do not nag your children. If you are too hard to please, they may want to stop trying.

²²Slaves, obey your masters in all things. Do not obey just when they are watching you, to gain their favor. But serve them honestly, because you respect the Lord. ²³In all the work you are doing, work the best you can. Work as if you were working for the Lord, not for men. ²⁴Remember that you will receive your reward from the Lord, which he promised to his people. You are serving the Lord Christ. ²⁵But anyone who does wrong will be punished for that wrong. And the Lord treats everyone the same.

4 Masters, give the things that are good and fair to your slaves. Remember that you have a Master in heaven.

Paul Tells Christians Some Things to Do

²Continue praying and be alert. And when you pray, always thank God. ³Also pray for us. Pray that God will give us an opportunity to tell his Good News. Pray that we can preach the secret truth that God has made known about Christ. I am in prison because I preach this truth. ⁴Pray that I can speak in a way that will make it clear as I should.

⁵Be wise in the way you act toward those who do not believe. Use your time in the best way you can. ⁶When you talk, you

should always be kind and wise. Then you will be able to answer everyone in the way you should.

News About the People with Paul

⁷Tychicus is my dear brother in Christ. He is a faithful minister and servant with me in the Lord. He will tell you all the news about me. ⁸That is why I am sending him. I want you to know how we are. And I am sending him to encourage you. ⁹I send him with Onesimus, a faithful and dear brother in Christ. He is one of your group. They will tell you all that has happened here.

¹⁰Aristarchus greets you. He is a prisoner with me. And Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, also greets you. (I have already told you what to do about Mark. If he comes, welcome him.) ¹¹Jesus (he is also called Justus) also greets you. These are the only Jewish believers who work with me for the kingdom of God. They have been a comfort to me.

¹²Epaphras also greets you. He is a servant of Jesus Christ and one of your group. He always prays for you. He prays that you will grow to be spiritually mature and have everything that God wants for you. ¹³I know that he has worked hard for you and the people in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. ¹⁴Demas and our dear friend Luke, the doctor, greet you.

¹⁵Greet the brothers in Laodicea, and Nympha, and the church that meets in her house. ¹⁶After this letter is read to you, be sure that it is also read to the church in Laodicea. And you read the letter that I wrote to Laodicea. ¹⁷Tell Archippus, "Be sure to do the work the Lord gave you."

¹⁸I greet you and write this with my own hand—Paul. Remember that I am a prisoner. God's grace be with you.

1 Thessalonians

1 From Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy.
To the church in Thessalonica, the church in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. May grace and peace be yours.

The Life and Faith of the Thessalonians

²We always remember you when we pray and thank God for all of you. ³When we pray to God our Father, we always thank him for the work you have done because of your faith. We thank him for the hard work you have done because of your love. And we thank him that you continue to be strong because of your hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴Brothers, God loves you, and we know that he has chosen you to be his. ⁵We brought the Good News to you, but we did not use only words. We brought the Good News with power, with the Holy Spirit, and with sure knowledge that it is true. Also you know how we lived when we were with you. We lived that way to help you. ⁶And you became like us and like the Lord. You suffered much, but still you accepted the teaching with the joy that comes from the Holy Spirit. ⁷So you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. ⁸The Lord's teaching spread from you in Macedonia and Achaia, and your faith in God has become known everywhere. So we do not need to say anything about your faith. ⁹They themselves [in Macedonia and Achaia] are telling about the good way you accepted us when we were there with you. They tell about how you stopped worshipping idols and changed to serving the living and true God. ¹⁰And you changed to wait for God's Son to come from heaven. God

raised that Son from death. He is Jesus, who saves us from God's angry judgment that is sure to come.

Paul's Work in Thessalonica

2 Brothers, you know that our visit to you was not a failure. ²Before we came to you, we suffered and were insulted in Philippi. You know about that. And when we came to you, many people were against us. But our God helped us to be brave and to tell you his Good News. ³Our message was a message to encourage you. We were not trying to lie. We had no evil plan. We were not trying to trick you. ⁴But we speak the Good News because God tested us and trusted us to do it. When we speak we are not trying to please men, but we are trying to please God, who tests our hearts. ⁵You know that we never tried to influence you by flattery. We were not trying to get your money. We had no selfishness to hide from you. God knows that this is true. ⁶We were not looking for praise from you or anyone else.

⁷We are apostles of Christ. When we were with you, we could have used our authority to command you, but we were very gentle with you. We were like a mother caring for her little children. ⁸Because we loved you, we were happy to share God's Good News with you. But not only that—we were also happy to share even our own lives with you. ⁹Brothers, I know that you remember how hard we worked. We worked night and day so that we would not burden any of you while we preached God's Good News to you.

¹⁰When we were with you, we lived in a holy and right way, without fault. You know that this is true, and God knows that this is true. ¹¹You know that we treated each of you as a father treats his own children. ¹²We strengthened you, we comforted you, and we urged you to live good lives for God. It is God who calls you to his glorious kingdom.

¹³Also, we always thank God because of the way you accepted his message. You heard his message from us, and you accepted it as the word of God, not the words of men. And it really is God's message. That message works in you who believe. ¹⁴Brothers, you have been like God's churches in Christ that are in Judea. God's people suffered bad things from the

Jews there, and you suffered the same bad things from the people of your own country. ¹⁵Those Jews killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets. And they forced us to leave that country [Judea]. They do not please God; they are against all people. ¹⁶They try to stop us from teaching the non-Jews so that they may be saved. But those Jews are adding more and more sins to the sins they already have. The anger of God has come to them at last.

Paul's Desire to Visit Them Again

¹⁷Brothers, we were separated from you for a short time, but our thoughts were still with you. We wanted very much to see you and tried very hard to do so. ¹⁸We wanted to come to you. I, Paul, tried to come many times, but Satan stopped us. ¹⁹For you are our hope, our joy, and the crown we will be proud of when our Lord Jesus Christ comes. ²⁰Truly you are our glory and our joy.

3 When we could wait no longer, we decided to stay in Athens alone ²and send Timothy to you. He is our brother, who works with us for God. He helps us tell people the Good News about Christ. We sent Timothy to strengthen and comfort you in your faith. ³We sent him so that none of you would be upset by these troubles we have now. You yourselves know that we must have these troubles. ⁴Even when we were with you, we kept telling you that we would be persecuted. And you know that it has happened the way we said. ⁵This is why I sent Timothy to you, so that I could know about your faith. I sent him when I could not wait any longer. I was afraid that the tempter [the devil] had tempted you, and then our hard work would have been wasted.

⁶But Timothy now has come back to us from you and has brought us good news about your faith and love. He told us that you always remember us in a good way and that you want to see us just as much as we want to see you. ⁷So, brothers, we are comforted about you, because of your faith. We have much trouble and suffering, but still we are comforted. ⁸For our life is really full if you stand strong in the Lord. ⁹We have so much joy before our God because of you and we thank him for you. But we cannot thank him enough for all the joy we feel. ¹⁰Night and

day we continue praying for you with all our heart. We pray that we can see you again and give you all the things you need to make your faith strong.

¹¹We pray that our God and Father and our Lord Jesus will prepare the way for us to come to you. ¹²We pray that the Lord will make your love grow more and more for each other and for all people. We pray that you will love others as we love you and ¹³that your hearts will be made strong. Then you will be holy and without fault before our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy people.

A Life that Pleases God

4 Brothers, now I have some other things to tell you. We taught you how to live in a way that will please God, and you are living that way. Now we ask you and encourage you in the Lord Jesus to live that way more and more. ²You know what we told you to do by the authority of the Lord Jesus. ³God wants you to be holy and to stay away from sexual sins. ⁴He wants each one of you to learn how to take a wife^a in a way that is holy and honorable. ⁵Do not take a wife just out of sexual desire as people do who do not know God. ⁶So do not wrong or cheat your brother in this way. The Lord will punish people who do those things. We have already told you and warned you about that. ⁷God called us to be holy and does not want us to live in sin. ⁸So the person who refuses to obey this teaching is refusing to obey God, not man. And God is the One who gives us his Holy Spirit.

⁹We do not need to write to you about having love for your brothers and sisters in Christ. God has already taught you to love each other. ¹⁰And truly you do love the brothers in all of Macedonia. Brothers, now we encourage you to love them more and more.

¹¹Do all you can to live a peaceful life. Take care of your own business. Do your own work. We have already told you to do these things. ¹²If you do, then people who are not believers will respect you, and you will not have to depend on others for what you need.

^{4a} Or vessel.

The Lord's Coming

¹³Brothers, we want you to know about those who have died. We do not want you to grieve as others who have no hope. ¹⁴We believe that Jesus died and that he rose again. So, because of Jesus, God will bring together with Jesus those who have died. ¹⁵What we tell you now is the Lord's own message. We who are left alive when the Lord comes again will not go ahead of those who have already died. ¹⁶The Lord himself will come down from heaven. There will be a loud command with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God. And those who have died and were in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷After that, those who are still alive at that time will be gathered up with them. We will be taken up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸So comfort each other with these words.

Be Ready for the Lord's Coming

5 Now, brothers, we do not need to write to you about times and dates. ²You know very well that the day the Lord comes again will be like a thief that comes in the night. ³People will say, "We have peace and we are safe." At that time destruction will come to them quickly like the pains of a woman who is having a baby. And those people will not escape. ⁴But you, brothers, are not living in darkness. And so that day will not surprise you like a thief. ⁵You are all people who belong to the light. You belong to the day. We do not belong to the night or to darkness. ⁶So we should not be like others who are asleep, but we should be awake and have self-control. ⁷Those who sleep, sleep at night. Those who get drunk, get drunk at night. ⁸But we belong to the day; so we should control ourselves. We should wear faith and love to protect us. And the hope of salvation should be our helmet. ⁹God did not choose us to suffer his anger, but to have salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁰Jesus died for us so that we can live together with him. It is not important if we are alive or dead when Jesus comes. ¹¹So comfort each other and give each other strength, just as you are doing now.

Final Instructions and Greetings

¹²Now brothers, we ask you to respect those people who work hard with you—those who lead you in the Lord and teach you. ¹³Respect them with a very special love because of the work they do.

Live in peace with each other. ¹⁴We ask you, brothers, to warn those who do not work. Encourage those who are afraid. Help those who are weak. Be patient with everyone. ¹⁵Be sure that no one pays back wrong for wrong. But always try to do what is good for each other and for all people.

¹⁶Always be happy. ¹⁷Never stop praying. ¹⁸Give thanks whatever happens. That is what God wants for you in Christ Jesus.

¹⁹Do not stop the work of the Spirit. ²⁰Do not treat prophecy as if it were not important. ²¹But test everything. Keep what is good. ²²And stay away from everything that is evil.

²³We pray that God himself, the God of peace, will make you completely pure. We pray that your whole self—spirit, soul, and body—will be kept safe and be without wrong when our Lord Jesus Christ comes. ²⁴The One who calls you will do that for you. You can trust him.

²⁵Brothers, please pray for us.

²⁶Give all the brothers a holy kiss when you meet. ²⁷I tell you by the authority of the Lord to read this letter to all the brothers.

²⁸The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

2 Thessalonians

1 From Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy.
To the church in Thessalonica in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

²Grace and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul Gives Thanks and Talks About God's Judgment

³We must always thank God for you. And we should do this because it is right. It is right because your faith is growing more and more. And the love that every one of you has for each other is also growing. ⁴So we boast about you to the other churches of God. We tell them about the way you continue to be strong and have faith. You are being persecuted and are suffering many troubles, but you continue with strength and faith.

⁵This is proof that God is right in his judgment. God wants you to be worthy of his kingdom. Your suffering is for that kingdom. ⁶And God will do what is right. He will give trouble to those who trouble you. ⁷And he will give peace to you who are troubled and to us also. God will give us this help when the Lord Jesus is shown to us from heaven with his powerful angels. ⁸He will come from heaven with burning fire to punish those who do not know God and who do not obey the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹They will be punished with a destruction that continues forever. They will not be allowed to be with the Lord, and they will be kept away from his great power. ¹⁰This will happen on the day when the Lord Jesus comes to receive glory with his holy people. And all the people

who have believed will be amazed at Jesus. You will be in that group of believers, because you believed what we told you.

¹¹That is why we always pray for you. We ask our God to help you live the good way that he called you to live. The goodness you have makes you want to do good, and the faith you have makes you work. We pray that with his power God will help you do these things more and more. ¹²We pray all this so that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ can have glory in you, and you can have glory in him. That glory comes from the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Evil Things Will Happen Before the Lord Comes

2 Brothers, we have something to say about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our meeting together with him. ²Do not become easily upset in your thinking or afraid if you hear that the day of the Lord has already come. Someone may say this in a prophecy or in a message. Or you may read it in a letter that someone tells you came from us. ³Do not let anyone fool you in any way. That day will not come until the turning away happens and the Man of Evil appears. He belongs to hell.⁴ He is against anything called God or anything that people worship. The Man of Evil puts himself above anything called God or anything that people worship. He even sits in God's temple and says that he is God.

⁵I told you when I was with you that all this would happen. Do you not remember? ⁶And you know what is stopping that Man of Evil now. He is being stopped now so that he will appear at the right time. ⁷The secret power of evil is already working in the world now, but there is one who is stopping that power. And he will continue to stop it until he is taken out of the way. ⁸Then that Man of Evil will appear. And the Lord Jesus will kill him with the breath that comes from his mouth and will destroy him with the glory of his coming. ⁹The Man of Evil will come by the power of Satan. He will have great power, and he will do many different false miracles, signs, and wonders. ¹⁰He will use every kind of evil to trick those who are lost. They are lost because they refused to love the truth. (If they loved the truth, they would be saved.) ¹¹For this reason God sends

^{3d} Or He is the son of destruction.

them something powerful that leads them away from the truth. He sends them that power so that they will believe something that is not true. ¹²So all those who do not believe the truth will be judged guilty. They did not believe the truth, and they enjoyed doing evil.

You Are Chosen for Salvation

¹³Brothers, the Lord loves you. God chose you from the beginning to be saved. So we must always thank God for you. You are saved by the Spirit that makes you holy and by your faith in the truth. ¹⁴God used the Good News that we preached to call you to be saved. He called you so that you can share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁵So, brothers, stand strong and continue to believe the teachings we gave you in our speaking and in our letter to you.

¹⁶⁻¹⁷We pray that the Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father will comfort you and strengthen you in every good thing you do and say. God loved us. Through his grace he gave us a good hope and comfort that continues forever.

Pray for Us

3 And now, brothers, pray for us. Pray that the Lord's teaching will continue to spread quickly. And pray that people will give honor to that teaching, just as happened with you. ²And pray that we will be protected from bad and evil people. (Not all people believe in the Lord.)

³But the Lord is faithful. He will give you strength and protect you from the Evil One. ⁴The Lord makes us feel sure that you are doing the things we told you. And we know that you will continue to do those things. ⁵We pray that the Lord will lead your hearts into God's love and Christ's patience.

The Obligation to Work

⁶Brothers, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ we command you to stay away from any believer who refuses to work. People who refuse to work are not following the teaching that we gave them. ⁷You yourselves know that you should live as we live. We were not lazy when we were with you. ⁸When we ate another person's food, we always paid for it. We worked

hard so that we would not be a trouble to any of you. And we kept working night and day. ⁹We had the right to ask you to help us. But we worked to take care of ourselves so that we would be an example for you to follow. ¹⁰When we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If anyone will not work, he will not eat."

¹¹We hear that some among you refuse to work. They do nothing but busy themselves in other people's lives. ¹²We command them to work quietly and earn their own food. In the Lord Jesus Christ we beg them to do this. ¹³Brothers, never become tired of doing good.

¹⁴If anyone does not obey what we tell you in this letter, then remember who he is. Do not associate with him. Then maybe he will feel ashamed. ¹⁵But do not treat him as an enemy—warn him as a brother.

Final Words

¹⁶We pray that the Lord of peace will give you peace at all times and in every way. May the Lord be with all of you.

¹⁷I am Paul, and I end this letter now in my own handwriting. All my letters have this to show they are from me. This is the way I write.

¹⁸May our Lord Jesus Christ show all of you his grace.

1 Timothy

1 From Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, by the command of God our Savior and Christ Jesus our hope.

²To Timothy, a true son to me because you believe.

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Warnings Against False Teachings

³I want you to stay in Ephesus. I asked you to do that when I went into Macedonia. Some people there in Ephesus are teaching false things. Stay there so that you can command them to stop. ⁴Tell them not to spend their time on stories that are not true and on long lists of names in family histories. These things only bring arguments; they do not help God's work. God's work is done by faith. ⁵The purpose of this command is for people to have love. To have this love they must have a pure heart, they must do what they know is right, and they must have true faith. ⁶Some people have wandered away from these things and have turned to worthless talk. ⁷They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about. They do not even understand what they say they are sure about.

⁸We know that the law is good if a man uses it right. ⁹We also know that the law is not made for good men. The law is made for people who are against the law and for those who refuse to follow the law. It is for people who are against God and are sinful, who are not holy and have no religion, who kill their fathers and mothers, murderers, ¹⁰those who are guilty of sexual

sins, homosexuals, those who sell slaves, who tell lies, who speak falsely, and people who do anything that is against the true teaching. ¹¹That teaching is part of the Good News that God gave me to tell. That glorious Good News is from the blessed God.

Thanks for God's Mercy

¹²I thank Christ Jesus our Lord because he trusted me and gave me this work of serving him. And he gives me strength.

¹³In the past I spoke against Christ and persecuted him and did all kinds of things to hurt him. But God showed mercy to me because I did not know what I was doing. I did those things when I did not believe. ¹⁴But the grace of our Lord was fully given to me, and with that grace came the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

¹⁵What I say is true, and you should fully accept it: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And I am the worst of sinners. ¹⁶But because of this I was given mercy. I was given mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus could show that he has patience without limit. Christ wanted me to be an example for those who would believe in him and have life forever. ¹⁷Honor and glory to the King who rules forever! He cannot be destroyed and cannot be seen. Honor and glory forever and ever to the only God. Amen.

¹⁸Timothy, my son, I am giving you a command that agrees with the prophecies that were given about you in the past. I tell you this so that you can follow those prophecies and fight the good fight. ¹⁹Continue to have faith and do what you know is right. Some people have not done this, and their faith has been destroyed. ²⁰Hymenaeus and Alexander are men who have done that. I have given them to Satan so that they will learn not to speak against God.

Some Rules for Men and Women

2 First, I tell you to pray for all people. Ask God for the things people need, and be thankful to him. ²You should pray for kings and for all who have authority. Pray for the leaders so that we can have quiet and peaceful lives—lives full of worship and respect for God. ³This is good and it pleases God our Sav-

ior. ⁴He wants all people to be saved, and he wants everyone to know the truth. ⁵There is one God, and there is one way that people can reach God. That way is through Jesus Christ, who is also a man. ⁶Jesus gave himself to pay for the sins of all people. He is the proof that came at the right time. ⁷That is why I was chosen to tell the Good News, and was chosen to be an apostle. (I am telling the truth. I am not lying.) I was chosen to teach the non-Jewish people to believe and know the truth.

⁸I want men everywhere to pray. These men who lift up their hands in prayer must be holy. They must not be men who become angry and have arguments.

⁹I also want women to wear clothes that are right for them. They should dress with respect and right thinking. They should not use fancy braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes to make themselves beautiful. ¹⁰But they should make themselves beautiful by doing good deeds. Women who say they worship God should make themselves beautiful in that way.

¹¹A woman should learn by listening quietly and being fully ready to obey. ¹²I do not allow a woman to teach a man or to have authority over a man. She must remain silent. ¹³For Adam was made first, Eve was made later. ¹⁴Also, Adam was not the one who was tricked. It was the woman who was tricked and became a sinner. ¹⁵But women will be saved through having children. They will be saved if they continue in faith, love, holiness, and self-control.

Leaders in the Church

3 What I say is true: If anyone wants to become an elder,^a he is wanting a good work. ²An elder must be so good that people cannot rightly criticize him. He must have only one wife. He must have self-control and be wise. He must be respected by others and must be ready to help people by accepting them into his home. He must be a good teacher. ³He must not drink too much wine, and he must not be a man who likes to fight. He must be gentle and peaceful. He must not love money. ⁴He must be a good leader of his own family so that his children obey him with full respect. ⁵(If a man does not know how to be a leader over his own family, he will not be able to

^{1a} Or overseer.

take care of God's church.) ⁶But an elder must not be a new believer. A new believer might be too proud of himself. Then he would be judged guilty for his pride just as the devil was. ⁷An elder must also have the respect of people who are not in the church. Then he will not be criticized by others and caught in the devil's trap.

Helpers in the Church

⁸In the same way, deacons must be men that people can respect. They must not say things they do not mean. They must not use their time drinking too much wine, and they must not be men who are always trying to get rich by cheating others. ⁹They must follow the faith that God made known to us and always do what they know is right. ¹⁰You should test those men first. If you find nothing wrong in them, then they can serve as deacons. ¹¹In the same way the women must have the respect of other people. They must not be women who repeat evil gossip about others. They must have self-control and be women who can be trusted in everything. ¹²Deacons must have only one wife. They must be good leaders of their children and their own families. ¹³Those who serve well as deacons are making an honorable place for themselves. And they will feel very sure of their faith in Christ Jesus.

The Secret of Our Life

¹⁴I hope I can come to you soon. But I am writing these things to you now. ¹⁵Then, even if I cannot come soon, you will know how people must live in the family^a of God. That family is the church of the living God, the support and foundation of the truth. ¹⁶Without doubt, the secret of our religion is great:

He was shown to us in a human body,
proved right by the Spirit,
seen by angels,
preached to the nations,
believed in by the world,
taken to heaven in glory.

^{15a} Or *house*.

A Warning About False Teachers

4 The Holy Spirit clearly says that in the later times some people will stop believing the faith. They will obey spirits that lie and will follow the teachings of demons. ²Such teachings come from men who lie and trick people, men who cannot see what is right and what is wrong. It is as if their understanding were destroyed by a hot iron. ³They tell people that it is wrong to marry and that some foods must not be eaten. But God made those foods, and the people who believe and who know the truth can eat those foods with thanks. ⁴Everything that God made is good. Nothing that God made should be refused if it is accepted with thanks to God. ⁵Everything God made is made holy by what God has said and by prayer.

Be A Good Servant of Christ Jesus

⁶Tell these things to the brothers. This will show that you are a good servant of Christ Jesus. You will show that you are made strong by the words of faith and good teaching that you have been following. ⁷People tell silly stories that do not agree with God's truth. Do not follow those stories. But teach yourself only to serve God. ⁸Training your body helps you in some ways, but serving God helps you in every way. It brings you blessings in this life and in the future life, too. ⁹What I say is true, and you should fully accept it. ¹⁰For this is why we work and struggle: We hope in the living God. He is the Savior of all people, especially those who believe in him.

¹¹Command and teach these things. ¹²You are young, but do not let anyone treat you as unimportant. Be an example to show the believers how they should live. Show them with your words, with the way you live, with your love, with your faith, and with your pure life. ¹³Continue to read the Scriptures to the people, and to preach and teach. Do these things until I come. ¹⁴Remember to use the gift that you have. That gift was given to you through a prophecy when the group of elders laid their hands on you. ¹⁵Continue to do those things. Give your life to doing them. Then everyone can see that your work is progressing. ¹⁶Be careful in your life and in your teaching. Continue to live and teach rightly. Then you will save yourself and those people who listen to you.

Some Rules for Living with Other People

5 Do not be harsh to an older man, but talk to him as if he were your father. Treat younger men like brothers. ²Treat older women like mothers, and younger women like sisters. Always treat them in a pure way.

³Take care of widows who are all alone. ⁴But if a widow has children or grandchildren, the first thing they need to learn is to do their duty to their own family. When they do this, they will be repaying their parents or grandparents. This pleases God. ⁵If a widow is all alone and without help, then she puts her hope in God and prays night and day for God's help. ⁶But the widow who uses her life to please herself is really dead while she is still living. ⁷Tell the believers there to do these things, so that no one can say they are doing wrong. ⁸A believer should take care of his own relatives, especially his own family. If he does not do that, he has turned against the faith. He is worse than a person who does not believe.

⁹To be on your list of widows, a woman must be at least 60 years old. She must have been faithful to her husband.^a ¹⁰She must be known as a woman who has done good works. By this, I mean good works such as raising her children, accepting visitors in her home, washing the feet of God's people, helping those in trouble, and using her life to do all kinds of good deeds.

¹¹But do not put younger widows on that list. After they give themselves to Christ, they are often pulled away from him by their physical needs. And then they want to marry again. ¹²And they will be judged for not doing what they first promised to do. ¹³Also, those younger widows begin to waste their time going from house to house. They begin to gossip and busy themselves with other people's lives. They say things that they should not say. ¹⁴So I want the younger widows to marry, have children, and take care of their homes. If they do this, then no enemy will have any reason to criticize them. ¹⁵But some of the younger widows have already turned away to follow Satan.

¹⁶If any woman who is a believer has widows in her family, then she should care for them herself. The church should not have to care for them. Then the church will be able to care for

^{9a} Or has had but one husband.

the widows who have no living family.

¹⁷The elders who lead the church well should receive great honor. Those who work hard by speaking and teaching especially deserve great honor. ¹⁸For the Scripture says, "When an ox is working in the grain, do not keep him from eating."^a And the Scripture also says, "The man who works has earned the pay he gets."^b

¹⁹Do not listen to someone who accuses an elder,^c unless there are two or three other persons who say he did wrong. ²⁰Tell those who keep on sinning that they are wrong. Do this in front of the whole church, so that the others will have a warning.

²¹Before God and Jesus Christ and the chosen angels, I command you to do these things without showing favor to anyone.

²²Think carefully before you lay your hands on anyone. Do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure.

²³Timothy, stop drinking only water and drink a little wine. This will help your stomach, and you will not be sick so often.

²⁴The sins of some people are easy to see even before they are judged. But the sins of others are seen only later. ²⁵So also good deeds are easy to see. But even when they are not easy to see, they cannot stay hidden.

6 All who are slaves should show full respect to their masters. When they do this, God's name and teaching will not be criticized. ²Some slaves have masters who are believers. This means they are all brothers. But the slaves should not show their masters any less respect. They should serve their masters even better, because they are helping believers they love.

False Teaching and True Riches

You must teach and preach these things. ³If anyone has a different teaching, he does not accept the true teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. And that teaching shows him the true way to serve God. ⁴The person who teaches falsely is full of pride and understands nothing. He is sick with a love for arguing and fighting about words. And that brings jealousy, making trouble, insults, and evil mistrust. ⁵And that also brings arguments

^{18a} Deuteronomy 25:4. ^{18b} Luke 10:7. ^{19c} Or *overseer*.

from men who have evil minds. They have lost the truth. They think that serving God is a way to get rich.

⁶It is true that serving God makes a person very rich, if he is satisfied with what he has. ⁷When we came into the world, we brought nothing. And when we die, we can take nothing out. ⁸So, if we have food and clothes, we will be satisfied with that. ⁹Those who want to become rich bring temptation to themselves. They are caught in a trap. They begin to want many foolish things that will hurt them, things that ruin and destroy people. ¹⁰The love of money causes all kinds of evil. Some people have left the faith because they want to get more and more money. But they have caused themselves much sorrow.

Some Things You Should Remember

¹¹But you are a man of God. So you should stay away from all those things. Try to live in the right way, serve God, have faith, love, patience, and gentleness. ¹²Keeping your faith is like running a race. Try as hard as you can to win. Be sure you receive the life that continues forever. You were called to have that life. And you confessed the great truth in a way that many people heard. ¹³Before God and Christ Jesus I give you a command. Christ Jesus is the One who confessed that same great truth when he stood before Pontius Pilate. And God is the One who gives life to everything. Now I tell you: ¹⁴Do the things you were commanded to do. Do them without wrong or blame until the time when our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. ¹⁵God will make that happen at the right time. God is the blessed and only Ruler. God is the King of all kings and the Lord of all lords. ¹⁶God is the only One who never dies. God lives in light so bright that men cannot go near it. No one has ever seen God, or can see him. May honor and power be to God forever. Amen.

¹⁷Give this command to those who are rich with things of this world. Tell them not to be proud. Tell them to hope in God, not their money. Money cannot be trusted, but God takes care of us richly. He gives us everything to enjoy. ¹⁸Tell the rich people to do good and to be rich in doing good deeds. Tell them to be happy to give and ready to share. ¹⁹By doing this they will be saving a treasure for themselves. That treasure will

be a strong foundation—their future life can be built on it. Then they will be able to have the life that is true life.

²⁰Timothy, God has trusted you with many things. Keep those things safe. Stay away from people who say foolish things that are not from God. Stay away from those who argue against the truth. They use something they call “knowledge”—but it is really not knowledge. ²¹They say that they have that “knowledge,” but they have left the faith.

Grace be with you.

2 Timothy

1 From Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God. God sent me to tell about the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus.

²To Timothy, a dear son to me. Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Thanksgiving and Encouragement

³I always remember you in my prayers, day and night. And I thank God for you in these prayers. He is the God my ancestors served. And I have always served him, doing what I know is right. ⁴I remember that you cried for me. And I want very much to see you so that I can be filled with joy. ⁵I remember your true faith. That kind of faith first belonged to your grandmother Lois and to your mother Eunice. And I know that you now have that same faith. ⁶That is why I want you to remember the gift God gave you when I laid my hands on you. Now I want you to use that gift and let it grow more and more, as a small flame grows into a fire. ⁷God did not give us a spirit that makes us afraid. He gave us a spirit of power and love and self-control.

⁸So do not be ashamed to tell people about our Lord. And do not be ashamed of me—I am a prisoner for the Lord. But suffer with me for the Good News. God gives us the strength to do this. ⁹God saved us and made us his holy people. That was not because of anything we did ourselves, but because of what he wanted and because of his grace. That grace was given to us through Christ Jesus before time began, ¹⁰but it was not shown to us until our Savior Christ Jesus came. Jesus destroyed death.

And through the Good News, he showed us the way to have life that cannot be destroyed. ¹¹I was chosen to tell that Good News and to be an apostle and a teacher. ¹²And I suffer now because I tell the Good News. But I am not ashamed. I know the One [Jesus] I have believed. And I am sure that he is able to protect what he has trusted me with until that Day. ¹³Follow the true teachings you heard from me. Follow them as an example of the faith and love we have in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴Protect the truth that you were given. Protect it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

¹⁵You know that everyone in the province of Asia has left me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes. ¹⁶I pray that the Lord will show mercy to the family of Onesiphorus. He has often helped me and was not ashamed that I was in prison. ¹⁷When he came to Rome, he looked and looked for me until he found me. ¹⁸I pray that the Lord will allow Onesiphorus to have mercy from the Lord on that Day. You know how many ways Onesiphorus helped me in Ephesus.

A Loyal Soldier of Christ Jesus

2 So, Timothy, my son, be strong in the grace that we have in Christ Jesus. ²You and many others have heard what I have taught. You should teach the same thing to men you can trust. Then they will be able to teach it to others. ³Share in the troubles that we have. Accept them like a true soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴A soldier wants to please his commanding officer, so he does not waste his time doing the things that most people do. ⁵If an athlete is running a race, he must obey all the rules in order to win. ⁶The farmer who works hard should be the first person to get some of the food that he grew. ⁷Think about these things that I am saying. The Lord will give you the ability to understand all these things.

⁸Remember Jesus Christ. He is from the family of David. After Jesus died, he was raised from death. This is the Good News that I preach, ⁹and I am suffering because of that Good News. I am even bound with chains like a criminal. But God's teaching is not in chains. ¹⁰So I patiently accept all these troubles. I do this so that those whom God has chosen can have the salvation

that is in Christ Jesus. With that salvation comes glory that never ends.

¹¹This teaching is true:

If we died with him [Jesus],
then we will also live with him.

¹²If we accept suffering,
then we will also rule with him.

If we refuse to accept him,
then he will refuse to accept us.

¹³If we are not faithful,
he will still be faithful,
because he cannot be false to himself.

An Approved Worker

¹⁴Continue teaching these things. And warn people before God not to argue about words. Arguing about words does not help anyone, and it ruins those who listen. ¹⁵Do the best you can to be the kind of person that God will accept, and give yourself to him. Be a worker who is not ashamed of his work—a worker who uses the true teaching in the right way. ¹⁶Stay away from those who talk about useless worldly things. That kind of talk will lead a person more and more away from God. ¹⁷Their teaching will spread like a sickness inside the body. Hymenaeus and Philetus are men like that. ¹⁸They have left the true teaching. They say that the rising from death has already taken place. And those two men are destroying the faith of some people. ¹⁹But God's strong foundation continues to stand. These words are written on that foundation: "The Lord knows those who belong to him."^a And also these words are written on that foundation, "Everyone who says that he believes in the Lord must stop doing wrong."

²⁰In a large house there are things made of gold and silver, but also there are things made of wood and clay. Some things are used for special purposes, and others are made for dirty work. ²¹If anyone makes himself clean from evil things, he will be used for special purposes. He will be made holy, and the Master can use him. He will be ready to do any good work.

^{19a} Numbers 16:5.

²²Stay away from the evil things young people desire to do. Try hard to live right and to have faith, love, and peace. Work for these things together with those who have pure hearts and trust in the Lord. ²³Stay away from foolish and stupid arguments. You know that such arguments grow into bigger arguments. ²⁴And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel! He must be kind to everyone. He must be a good teacher. He must be patient. ²⁵The Lord's servant must gently teach those who do not agree with him. Maybe God will let them change their hearts so that they can accept the truth. ²⁶The devil has trapped them and causes them to do what he wants, but maybe they can wake up and free themselves from the devil's trap.

The Last Days

3 Remember this! There will be many troubles in the last days. ²In those times people will love only themselves and money. They will be boastful and proud. They will insult others. They will not obey their parents. They will not be thankful or be the kind of people God wants. ³They will not have love for others. They will refuse to forgive others and will speak bad things. They will not control themselves. They will be cruel and will hate what is good. ⁴They will turn against their friends. They will do foolish things without thinking. They will be conceited and proud. They will love pleasure—they will not love God. ⁵They will continue to act as if they serve God, but they do not really serve God. Stay away from those people. ⁶Some of them go into homes and get control of weak women who are full of sin. They are led to sin by the many evil desires they have. ⁷Those women always try to learn new teachings, but they are never able to understand the truth fully. ⁸Just as Jannes and Jambres were against Moses, these people are against the truth. They are people whose thinking has been confused. They have failed in trying to follow the faith. ⁹But they will not be successful in what they do, because everyone will see that they are foolish. That is what happened to Jannes and Jambres.

Last Instructions

¹⁰But you know all about me. You know what I teach and the way I live. You know my goal in life. You know my faith, my

patience, and my love. You know that I never stop trying. ¹¹You know about my persecutions and my sufferings. You know all that happened to me in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra. You know the persecutions I suffered in those places. But the Lord saved me from all those troubles. ¹²Everyone who wants to live the way God wants, in Christ Jesus, will be persecuted. ¹³People who are evil and cheat others will go from bad to worse. They will fool others, but they will also be fooling themselves.

¹⁴But you should continue following the teachings that you learned. You know that they are true. And you know you can trust those who taught you. ¹⁵You have known the Holy Scriptures since you were a child. The Scriptures are able to make you wise, and that wisdom leads to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All Scripture is given by God and is useful for teaching and for showing people what is wrong in their lives. It is useful for correcting faults and teaching how to live right. ¹⁷Using the Scriptures, the person who serves God will be ready and will have everything he needs to do every good work.

4 Before God and Jesus Christ I give you a command. Christ Jesus is the One who will judge all who are living and all who have died. Jesus has a kingdom, and he is coming again. So I give you this command: ²Preach the Word. Be ready at all times. Tell people what they need to do, tell them when they are wrong, and encourage them. Do these things with great patience and careful teaching. ³The time will come when people will not listen to the true teaching. They will find more and more teachers who are pleasing to them, teachers who say the things they want to hear. ⁴They will stop listening to the truth. They will begin to follow the teaching in false stories. ⁵But you should control yourself at all times. When troubles come, accept them. Do the work of telling the Good News. Do all the duties of a servant of God.

⁶My life is being given as an offering to God. The time has come for me to leave this life. ⁷I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. ⁸Now, a crown is waiting for me. I will get that crown for being right with God. The Lord is the judge who judges rightly, and he will give me the crown on that Day. He will give that crown not only to me but to all those who have waited with love for him to come again.

Personal Words

⁹Do your best to come to me as soon as you can. ¹⁰Demas loved this world too much. He left me and went to Thessalonica. Crescens went to Galatia, and Titus went to Dalmatia. ¹¹Luke is the only one still with me. Get Mark and bring him with you when you come. He can help me in my work here. ¹²I sent Tychicus to Ephesus.

¹³When I was in Troas, I left my coat there with Carpus. So when you come, bring it to me. Also, bring my books, especially the ones written on parchment.

¹⁴Alexander the metalworker did many harmful things against me. The Lord will punish him for what he did. ¹⁵You should be careful that he does not hurt you too, because he fought strongly against our teaching.

¹⁶The first time I defended myself, no one helped me. Everyone left me. I pray that God will forgive them. ¹⁷But the Lord stayed with me. He gave me strength so that I could fully tell the Good News to the non-Jews. The Lord wanted all the non-Jews to hear it. So I was saved from the lion's mouth. ¹⁸The Lord will save me when anyone tries to hurt me. He will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. Glory forever and ever be the Lord's.

Final Greetings

¹⁹Greet Priscilla and Aquila and the family of Onesiphorus. ²⁰Erastus stayed in Corinth, but I left Trophimus sick in Miletus. ²¹Try as hard as you can to come to me before winter.

Eubulus sends greetings to you. Also Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brothers in Christ greet you.

²²The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

Titus

1 From Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ. I was sent to help the faith of God's chosen people. I was sent to help them to know the truth that shows people how to serve God. ²That faith and that knowledge come from our hope for life forever. God promised that life to us before time began, and God does not lie. ³At the right time God let the world know about that life through preaching. He trusted me with that work, and I preached because God our Savior commanded me to.

⁴To Titus. You are a true son to me in the faith we share.

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

Titus' Work in Crete

⁵I left you in Crete so that you could finish doing the things that still needed to be done. I left you there also so that you could choose men to be elders in every town. ⁶To be an elder, a man must not be guilty of doing wrong. He must have only one wife, and his children must be believers. They must not be known as children who are wild and who do not obey. ⁷An elder^a has the job of taking care of God's work. So he must not be guilty of doing wrong. He must not be a man who is proud and selfish or who becomes angry quickly. He must not drink too much wine. He must not be a person who likes to fight. And he must not be a person who always tries to get rich by cheating people. ⁸An elder must be ready to help others by accepting them into his home. He must love what is good. He must be

^{7a} Or overseer.

wise. He must live right. He must be holy. And he must be able to control himself. ⁹An elder must faithfully follow the truth just as we teach it. An elder must be able to help others by using true and right teaching. And he must be able to show those who are against the true teaching that they are wrong.

¹⁰There are many people who refuse to obey—people who talk about worthless things and lead others into the wrong way. I am talking mostly about those who say that all non-Jews must be circumcised. ¹¹These people must be stopped from talking. They are destroying whole families by teaching things that they should not teach. They teach them only to cheat people and make money. ¹²Even one of their own prophets from Crete said, “Cretan people are always liars. They are evil animals and lazy people who do nothing but eat.” ¹³These words are true. So tell those people that they are wrong. You must be strict with them. Then they will become strong in the faith ¹⁴and stop accepting Jewish stories. And they will stop following the commands of others who do not accept the truth. ¹⁵To those who are pure, all things are pure. But to those who are full of sin and do not believe, nothing is pure. The thinking of those people has become evil and their knowledge of what is right has been ruined. ¹⁶They say they know God, but the evil things they do show that they do not accept God. They are terrible people, they refuse to obey, and they are useless for doing anything good.

Following the True Teaching

2 You must tell everyone what they must do to follow the true teaching. ²Teach older men to have self-control, to be serious, and to be wise. They should be strong in faith, strong in love, and strong in patience.

³Also, teach older women to be holy in the way they live. Teach them not to speak against others or have the habit of drinking too much wine. They should teach what is good. ⁴In that way they can teach younger women to love their husbands and children, ⁵to be wise and pure, to take care of their homes, to be kind, and to obey their husbands. Then no one will be able to criticize the teaching God gave us.

⁶In the same way, tell young men to be wise. ⁷You should do good deeds to be an example in every way for young men.

When you teach, be honest and serious. ⁸And when you speak, speak the truth so that you cannot be criticized. Then anyone who is against you will be ashamed because there is nothing bad that he can say against us.

⁹And tell slaves to obey their masters at all times. They should try to please them and not argue with them. ¹⁰They should not steal from them, but they should show their masters that they can be trusted. Slaves should do these things so that in everything they do, they will show that the teaching of God our Savior is good.

¹¹God's grace has come, bringing salvation to everyone. ¹²It teaches us not to live against God and not to do the evil things the world wants to do. That grace teaches us to live on earth now in a wise and right way—a way that shows that we serve God. ¹³We should live like that while we are waiting for the coming of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. He is our great hope, and he will come with glory. ¹⁴He gave himself for us; he died to free us from all evil. He died to make us pure people who belong only to him—people who are always wanting to do what is good.

¹⁵Tell everyone these things. You have full authority. So use that authority to strengthen the people and tell them what they should do. And do not let anyone treat you as unimportant.

The Right Way to Live

3 Remind the believers to do these things: to be under the authority of rulers and government leaders, to obey them and be ready to do good, ²to speak no evil about anyone, to live in peace with all, to be gentle and polite to all men.

³In the past we were foolish people, too. We did not obey, we were wrong, and we were slaves to many things our bodies wanted and enjoyed. We lived doing evil and being jealous. People hated us and we hated each other. ⁴But then the kindness and love of God our Savior was made known. ⁵He saved us because of his mercy—not because of good deeds we did to be right with God. He saved us through the washing that made us new people. He saved us by making us new through the Holy Spirit. ⁶God poured out to us that Holy Spirit fully through Jesus Christ our Savior. ⁷We were made right with God by His

grace. And God gave us the Spirit so that we could receive the life that never ends. That is what we hope for.

⁸This teaching is true. And I want you to be sure that the people understand these things. Then those who believe in God will be careful to use their lives for doing good. These things are good and will help all people.

⁹Stay away from those who have foolish arguments, who talk about useless family histories, who make trouble and fight about what the law teaches. Those things are worth nothing and will not help anyone. ¹⁰If someone causes arguments, then give him a warning. If he continues to cause arguments, warn him again. If he still continues causing arguments, then do not associate with him. ¹¹You know that such a person is evil and sinful. His sins prove that he is wrong.

Some Things to Remember

¹²I will send Artemas and Tychicus to you. When I send them, try hard to come to me at Nicopolis. I have decided to stay there this winter. ¹³Zenas the lawyer and Apollos will be traveling from there. Do all that you can to help them on their way. Be sure that they have everything they need. ¹⁴Our people must learn to use their lives for doing good deeds. They should do good to those in need. Then our people will not have empty lives.

¹⁵All who are with me here greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith.

Grace be with you all.

Philemon

From Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and from Timothy, our brother.

To Philemon, our dear friend and worker with us. ²Also to Apphia, our sister; to Archippus, a worker with us; and to the church that meets in your home.

³Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Philemon's Love and Faith

⁴I remember you in my prayers. And I always thank my God for you, ⁵because I hear about the love you have for all God's holy people and the faith you have in the Lord Jesus. ⁶I pray that the sharing of your faith will make you understand every blessing that we have in Christ. ⁷My brother, you have shown love to God's people, and you have made them feel happy. This has given me great joy and comfort.

Accept Onesimus Like a Brother

⁸Therefore, I could be bold in Christ and command you to do what you should do. ⁹But, because of love, I am asking you to do it instead. I, Paul, am an old man now, and a prisoner for Christ Jesus. ¹⁰I am asking you a favor for my son Onesimus. He became my son while I was a prisoner. ¹¹In the past he was useless to you, but now he has become useful for both you and me.

¹²I am sending him back to you, and with him I am sending my own heart. ¹³I wanted to keep him with me to help me while

I am in chains for the Good News. By helping me he would be serving you. ¹⁴But I did not want to do anything without asking you first. Then the favor you do for me will be because you want to do it, not because I forced you to do it.

¹⁵Onesimus was separated from you for a short time. Maybe that happened so that you could have him back forever— ¹⁶not to be a slave, but better than a slave, to be a loved brother. I love him very much, but you will love him even more. You will love him as a man and as a brother in the Lord.

¹⁷If you think of me as your friend, then accept Onesimus back. Welcome him as you would welcome me. ¹⁸If Onesimus has done anything wrong to you or if he owes you anything, charge that to me. ¹⁹I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay back anything Onesimus owes. And I will say nothing about what you owe me for your own life. ²⁰So, my brother, I ask that you do this for me in the Lord. Comfort my heart in Christ. ²¹I write this letter knowing that you will do what I ask you—even more than I ask.

²²Also, prepare a room for me to stay in. I hope that God will answer your prayers and I will be able to come to you.

Final Greetings

²³Epaphras is a prisoner with me for Christ Jesus. He sends greetings to you. ²⁴And also Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke send greetings. They are workers together with me.

²⁵The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Hebrews

God Has Spoken Through His Son

1 In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets. He spoke to them many times and in many different ways. ²And now in these last days God has spoken to us through his Son. God has chosen his Son to own all things, and he made the world through the Son. ³The Son shows the glory of God. He is a perfect copy of God's nature. He holds everything together with his powerful word. He made people clean from their sins. Then he sat down at the right side of the Great One [God] in heaven. ⁴The Son became much greater than the angels, just as God gave him a name that is much greater than theirs.

⁵For God never said this to any of the angels,

“You are my Son.

Today I have become your Father.”^a

Psalms 2:7

Nor did God say of any angel,

“I will be his Father,

and he will be my Son.”

2 Samuel 7:14

⁶And when God brings his firstborn Son into the world, he says,

“Let all God's angels worship him.”^b

Deuteronomy 32:43

⁷This is what God said about the angels:

“God makes his angels become like winds,^c

and he makes his servants become

like flames of fire.”

Psalms 104:4

^{5a} Or *have begotten you*. ^{6b} These words are found in Deuteronomy 32:43 in the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament, and in a Hebrew copy among the Dead Sea Scrolls. ^{7c} Or *spirits*, as in verse 14.

⁸But God said this about his Son:

“Your throne, O God, will last forever and ever;
you will rule your kingdom with right judgments.

⁹You love the right and you hate the wrong.
So God, your God, has given you a greater joy
than he gave those with you.”

Psalm 45:6-7

¹⁰God also says,

“O Lord, in the beginning you made the earth.
And your hands made the heavens.

¹¹They will disappear, but you will stay.
They will grow old like clothes.

¹²You will fold them like a coat.
And they will be changed like clothes.
But you never change.

And your life will never end.”

Psalm 102:25-27

¹³And God never said this to an angel:

“Sit at my right side
until I put your enemies
under your control.”

Psalm 110:1

¹⁴All the angels are spirits who serve God and are sent to help those who will receive salvation.

Our Salvation Is Greater than the Law Brought by Angels

2 So we must be more careful to follow what we were taught so that we will not be pulled away from the truth. ²The teaching [the law] that God spoke through angels was shown to be true. And anyone who did not follow it or obey it received the punishment he deserved. ³Our salvation is very great. So surely we also will be punished if we live as if this salvation is not important. It was the Lord himself who first told about this salvation. And those who heard him proved to us that this salvation is true. ⁴God also proved it by using wonders, great signs, and many kinds of miracles. And he proved it by giving people gifts through the Holy Spirit, just as he wanted.

Christ Became like Men to Bring Them Salvation

⁵God did not choose angels to be the rulers of the world that

^{13a} Or until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.

was coming. It is that future world we have been talking about.

⁶Someone has said somewhere,

“[God,] Why do you care about man?

Why do you care about the son of man?

⁷For a short time you made him lower
than the angels.

You gave him glory and honor to be his crown.

⁸You put everything under his control.”^a

Psalm 8:4-6

If God put everything under man’s control, there was nothing left that he did not rule. But we do not yet see man ruling over everything. ⁹But we see Jesus! For a short time he was made lower than the angels. But now we see him wearing a crown of glory and honor because he suffered and died. Because of God’s grace, he died for everyone.

¹⁰God is the One who made all things, and all things are for his glory. God wanted to have many sons share his glory. So God did what he needed to do. He made perfect the One [Jesus] who leads people to salvation. He made Jesus a perfect Savior through Jesus’ suffering.

¹¹The One [Jesus] who makes people holy and those who are made holy are from the same family. So he [Jesus] is not ashamed to call them his brothers. ¹²He says,

“I will tell my brothers about you [God].

When we meet together, I will sing your praises.”

Psalm 22:22

¹³He also says,

“I will trust in God.”

Isaiah 8:17

And he also says,

“I am here. And with me are the children
that God has given me.”

Isaiah 8:18

¹⁴These children are people with physical bodies. So Jesus himself became like them and had the same experiences they have. He did this so that, by dying, he could destroy the one who has the power of death. That one is the devil. ¹⁵Jesus became like men and died so that he could free them. They were like slaves all their lives because of their fear of death. ¹⁶Clearly, it is not angels that Jesus helps, but the people who are from

^aOr feet.

Abraham. ¹⁷For this reason Jesus had to be made like his brothers in every way. He became like men so that he could be their merciful and faithful high priest in service to God. Then Jesus could bring forgiveness for their sins.^a ¹⁸And now he can help those who are tempted. He is able to help because he himself suffered and was tempted.

Jesus Is Greater than Moses

3 So all of you, holy brothers, should think about Jesus. You were all called by God. God sent Jesus to us, and he is the high priest of our faith. ²And Jesus was faithful to God as Moses was. He did everything God wanted him to do in God's house [family]. ³A man who builds a house receives more honor than the house. It is the same with Jesus. Jesus should have more honor than Moses. ⁴Every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. ⁵Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant. He told what God would say in the future. ⁶But Christ is faithful over God's house as a Son. And we are God's house [family] if we hold on to our faith and are proud of the great hope we have.

We Must Continue to Follow God

⁷So it is as the Holy Spirit says:

"If you hear God's voice today,

⁸ do not be stubborn as in the past,
when you were against God,
when you tested him in the desert.

⁹For 40 years in the desert your ancestors
saw the things I did.

But they tested me and my patience.

¹⁰So I was angry with them.

I said, 'Their thoughts
are always wrong.

They have never understood my ways.'

¹¹So I was angry and made a promise:

'They will never enter
and have my rest.'"

Psalm 95:7-11

¹²So brothers, be careful that none of you has an evil, un-

^{17a} Or He might turn aside God's wrath, taking away sins.

believing heart. This will stop you from following the living God. ¹³But encourage each other every day. Do this while it is "today." Help each other so that none of you will become hardened because of sin and its tricks. ¹⁴We all share in Christ. This is true if we keep till the end the sure faith we had in the beginning. ¹⁵As it has just been said:

"If you hear God's voice today,
do not be stubborn as in the past
when you were against God."

Psalm 95:7-8

¹⁶Who heard God's voice and was against him? It was all those people Moses led out of Egypt. ¹⁷And whom was God angry with for 40 years? He was angry with those who sinned, who died in the desert. ¹⁸And whom was God talking to when he promised that they would never enter and have his rest? He was talking to those who did not obey him. ¹⁹So we see that they were not allowed to enter [God's rest] because they did not believe.

4 Now God has left us that promise that we may enter and have his rest. Let us be very careful, then, so that none of you will fail to get that rest. ²The Good News was preached to us just as it was to them. But the teaching they heard did not help them, because they did not accept it with faith. ³We who have believed are able to enter and have God's rest. As God has said,

"I was angry and made a promise:
'They will never enter
and have my rest.'"

Psalm 95:11

But God's work was finished from the time he made the world. ⁴Somewhere he talked about the seventh day: "And on the seventh day God rested from all his work."^a ⁵And again in the passage quoted [God says], "They will never enter and have my rest."

⁶It is still true that some people will enter and have God's rest. But those who first heard the way to be saved did not enter. They did not enter because they did not obey. ⁷So God planned another day, called "today." He spoke about that day through David a long time later. It is the same passage used before:

^{4a} Genesis 2:2.

“If you hear God’s voice today,
do not be stubborn as in the past.”

Psalm 95:7-8

⁸We know that Joshua did not lead the people into that rest. We know this because God spoke later about another day. ⁹This shows that the seventh-day rest^a for God’s people is still coming. ¹⁰For anyone who enters and has God’s rest will rest from his work as God did. ¹¹So let us try as hard as we can to enter God’s rest. We must try hard so that no one will be lost by following the example of those who refused to obey.

¹²God’s word is alive and working. It is sharper than the sharpest sword. It cuts all the way into us, where the soul and the spirit are joined. It cuts to the center of our joints and our bones. And God’s word judges the thoughts and feelings in our hearts. ¹³Nothing in all the world can be hidden from God. Everything is clear and lies open before him. And to him we must give account for the way we have lived.

Jesus Helps Us Come Before God

¹⁴We have a great high priest who has gone into heaven. He is Jesus the Son of God. So let us hold on to the faith we have. ¹⁵For our high priest is able to understand our weaknesses. When he lived on earth, he was tempted in every way that we are, but he did not sin. ¹⁶Let us, then, feel free to come before God’s throne. Here there is grace. And we can receive mercy and grace to help us when we need it.

5 Every high priest is chosen from among men. He is given the work of going before God for them. He must offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. ²He himself is weak. So he is able to be gentle with those who do not understand and who are doing wrong things. ³Because he is weak the high priest must offer sacrifices for his own sins. Then he offers sacrifices for the sins of the people.

⁴To be a high priest is an honor. But no one chooses himself for this work. He must be called by God as Aaron was. ⁵So also Christ did not choose himself to have the honor of being a high priest. But God said to him,

“You are my Son;
today I have become your Father.”

Psalm 2:7

^{9a} Or sabbath rest.

⁶And in another place he says,
“You will be a priest forever,
a priest like Melchizedek.”

Psalm 110:4

⁷While Jesus lived on earth, he prayed to God and asked God for help. He prayed with loud cries and tears to the One who could save him from death. And his prayer was heard because he left it all up to God. ⁸Even though Jesus was the Son, he learned to obey by what he suffered. ⁹And he became our perfect high priest. He gives eternal salvation to all who obey him. ¹⁰And God made Jesus high priest, a priest like Melchizedek.

Warning Against Falling Away

¹¹We have much to say about this. But it is hard to explain because you are so slow to understand. ¹²You have had enough time so that by now you should be teachers. But you need someone to teach you again the first lessons of God's message. You still need the teaching that is like milk. You are not ready for solid food. ¹³Anyone who lives on milk is still a baby. He knows nothing about right teaching. ¹⁴But solid food is for those who are grown-up. They have practiced in order to know the difference between good and evil.

6 So let us go on to grown-up teaching. Let us not go back over the beginning lessons we learned about Christ. We should not start over again with teaching about turning from acts that lead to death and of believing in God. ²We should not return to the teaching of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of the raising of the dead and eternal judgment. ³And we will do this if God allows.

⁴Some people cannot be brought back again to a changed life. They were once in God's light. They enjoyed heaven's gift, and they shared in the Holy Spirit. ⁵They found out how good God's word is, and they received the powers of his new age. ⁶And then they fell away from Christ! It is not possible to keep on bringing them back to a changed life again. For they are nailing the Son of God to a cross again and are making fun of his death.

⁷Some people are like land that gets plenty of rain. The land produces a good crop for those who work it, and it receives God's blessings. ⁸Other people are like land that grows thorns

and weeds and is worthless. It is in danger of being cursed by God. It will be destroyed by fire.

⁹Dear friends, we are saying this to you, but we really expect better things from you that will lead to your salvation. ¹⁰God is fair. He will not forget the work you did and the love you showed for him by helping his people. And he will remember that you are still helping them. ¹¹We want each of you to go on with the same hard work all your lives. Then you will surely get what you hope for. ¹²We do not want you to become lazy. Be like those who have faith and patience. They will receive what God has promised.

¹³God made a promise to Abraham. And as there is no one greater than God, he used himself when he made the vow to Abraham. ¹⁴He said, "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants."^a ¹⁵Abraham waited patiently for this to happen, and he received what God promised.

¹⁶People always use the name of someone greater than themselves when they make a vow. The vow proves that what they say is true. And this ends all arguing about what they say. ¹⁷God wanted to prove that his promise was true. He wanted to prove this to those who would get what he promised. He wanted them to understand clearly that his purposes never change. So God proved his promise by also making a vow. ¹⁸These two things cannot change. God cannot lie when he makes a promise, and he cannot lie when he makes a vow. These things encourage us who came to God for safety. They give us strength to hold on to the hope we have been given. ¹⁹We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, sure and strong. It enters the Most Holy Place [heaven] behind the curtain. ²⁰Jesus has gone in there ahead of us and for us. He has become the high priest forever, a priest like Melchizedek.

The Priest Melchizedek

7 Melchizedek was the king of Salem and a priest for God the Most High. He met Abraham when Abraham was coming back after defeating the kings. When they met, Melchizedek blessed Abraham. ²And Abraham gave Melchizedek a tenth of everything he had. Melchizedek's name means, first, "king of

^{14a} Genesis 22:17.

goodness.”^a Also, he is king of Salem, which means “king of peace.”³ No one knows who Melchizedek’s father or mother was.^b No one knows where he came from, and no one knows when he was born or when he died. Melchizedek is like the Son of God; he continues being a priest forever.

⁴You can see that Melchizedek was very great. Abraham, the great father, gave Melchizedek a tenth of everything that Abraham won in battle. ⁵Now the law says that those in the family group of Levi who become priests must get a tenth from the people. The priests collect it from their own people [the Jews], even though the priests and the people are both from the family of Abraham. ⁶Melchizedek was not from the family group of Levi, but he got a tenth from Abraham. And he blessed Abraham—the man who had God’s promises. ⁷And everyone knows that the more important person blesses the less important person. ⁸Those priests [of Levi] get a tenth, but they are only men who live and then die. But Melchizedek, who got a tenth, continues living, as the Scripture says. ⁹It is Levi who gets a tenth. But we might even say that when Abraham paid Melchizedek a tenth, then Levi also paid it. ¹⁰Levi was not yet born, but Levi was in the body of his ancestor Abraham when Melchizedek met Abraham.

¹¹The people were given the law based on a system of priests from the Levi family group. But they could not be made spiritually perfect through that system of priests. So there was a need for another priest to come. I mean a priest like Melchizedek, not Aaron. ¹²And when a different kind of priest comes, the law must be changed, too. ¹³We are saying these things about Christ. He belonged to a different family group. No one from that family group ever served at the altar. ¹⁴It is clear that our Lord came from the family group of Judah. And Moses said nothing about priests belonging to that family group.

Jesus Is a Priest like Melchizedek

¹⁵And this becomes even more clear. We see that another priest [Jesus] comes, who is like Melchizedek. ¹⁶He was not made a priest by human rules and laws. He became a priest through

^{2a} Or *My king is righteous*, that is, *king of righteousness*. ^{3b} Or *Melchizedek was without father, without mother, without genealogy*.

the power of his life, which continues forever. ¹⁷It is declared: "You will be a priest forever, a priest like Melchizedek."^a

¹⁸The old rule [law] is now set aside because it was weak and useless. ¹⁹The law [of Moses] could not make anything perfect. But now a better hope has been given to us, and with this hope we can come near to God.

²⁰Also, it is important that God made a vow when he made Jesus high priest. When the others became priests, there was no vow. ²¹But Christ became a priest with a vow. God said:

"The Lord has made a vow
and will not change his mind:
'You are a priest forever.'"

Psalm 110:4

²²So this means that Jesus is the guarantee of a better agreement.

²³Also, when one of the other priests died, he could not continue being a priest. So there were many priests. ²⁴But Jesus lives forever. He will never stop serving as priest. ²⁵So he is always able to save those who come to God through him. He can do this, because he always lives, ready to help those who come before God.

²⁶So Jesus is the kind of high priest that we need. He is holy—he has no sin in him. He is pure and not influenced by sinners. And he is raised above the heavens. ²⁷He is not like the other priests. They had to offer sacrifices every day, first for their own sins, and then for the sins of the people. But Christ offered his sacrifice only once and for all time. He offered himself! ²⁸The law chooses high priests who are men with all their weaknesses. But the word of God's vow came later than the law. It made the Son to be high priest. And that Son has been made perfect forever.

Jesus Our High Priest

8 Here is the point of what we are saying: We do have a high priest who sits on the right side of God's throne in heaven. ²Our high priest serves in the Most Holy Place.^b He serves in the true place of worship^c that was made by God, not by men.

³Every high priest has the work of offering gifts and sacrifices. So our high priest must also offer something. ⁴If our high priest were now living on earth, he would not be a priest.

^{17a} Psalm 110:4. ^{2b} Or *holy of holies*. ^{2c} Or *the tabernacle*.

There are already priests here who follow the law by offering gifts to God. ⁵The work that they do as priest is only a dim copy of what is in heaven. For when Moses was ready to build the place of worship, God warned him: "Be sure to make everything exactly like the pattern I showed you on the mountain."

⁶But the priestly work that has been given to Jesus is much greater than the work that was given to the other priests. In the same way, the new agreement that Jesus made is much greater than the old one. And the new agreement is based on promises of better things.

⁷If there was nothing wrong with the first agreement, there would be no need for a second agreement. ⁸But God found something wrong with his people. He says:

"The time is coming, says the Lord,
when I will give a new agreement
to the people of Israel,
and to the people of Judah.

⁹It will not be like the agreement I gave
to their fathers
on the day I took them by the hand
and led them out of Egypt.
They did not continue following the agreement
I gave them,
and I turned away from them, says the Lord.

¹⁰This is the new agreement I will give
the people of Israel.
I will give it in the future,
says the Lord:
I will put my laws in their minds,
and I will write them on their hearts.
I will be their God,
and they will be my people.

¹¹None of them will have to teach
his neighbor or his brother.
He will not need to tell them to know the Lord.
For all shall know me,
from the least to the greatest of them.

¹²And I will forgive the wrongs they do against me,
and I will no longer remember their sins." *Jeremiah 31:31-34*

¹³God called this a new agreement, so he has made the first agreement old. And anything that is old and worn out is ready to disappear.

Worship Under the Old Agreement

9 The first agreement had rules for worship. And it had a man-made place for worship. ²A tent was set up for this. The first area in the tent was called the Holy Place. In it were the lamp and the table with the special bread offered to God. ³Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place.^a ⁴In it was a golden altar for burning incense. Also there was the chest that held the old agreement. The chest was covered with gold. Inside this chest was a golden jar of manna and Aaron's rod—the rod that once grew leaves. Also in it were the stone tablets of the old agreement. ⁵Above the chest were the cherubim that showed God's glory. The wings of the cherubim reached over the mercy seat. But we cannot tell everything about these things now.

⁶Everything in the tent was made ready in this way. Then the priests went into the first room every day to do their worship. ⁷But only the high priest could go into the second room, and he did that only once a year. He could never enter the inside room without taking blood with him. He offered that blood to God for himself and for the people's sins. These were sins people did without knowing that they were sinning. ⁸The Holy Spirit uses these two separate rooms to teach us this: that the way into the Most Holy Place was not open while the first room was still there. ⁹This is an example for the present time. It shows that the gifts and sacrifices offered cannot make the worshiper perfect in his heart. ¹⁰These gifts and sacrifices were only about food and drink and special washings. They were rules for the body, to be followed until the time of God's new way.

Worship Under the New Agreement

¹¹But Christ has come as the high priest of the good things we now have. The tent he entered is greater and more perfect. It is not made by men. It does not belong to this world. ¹²Christ

^{3a} Or *holy of holies*.

entered the Most Holy Place^a only once—and for all time. He did not take with him the blood of goats and calves. His sacrifice was his own blood. He entered the Most Holy Place and set us free from sin forever. ¹³The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a cow are sprinkled on the people who are “unclean,” and this makes their bodies “clean” again. ¹⁴How much more is done by the blood of Christ! He offered himself through the eternal Spirit as a perfect sacrifice to God. His blood will make our hearts clean from acts that lead to death. We are made pure so that we may serve the living God.

¹⁵So Christ makes a new agreement. Those who are called can now receive the blessings that God has promised. These blessings will last forever. They can have those things because Christ died so that the people who lived under the first agreement could be set free from sin.

¹⁶When there is a will, it must be proved that the man who wrote that will is dead. ¹⁷A will means nothing while the man is alive. It can be used only after he dies. ¹⁸This is why even the first agreement could not begin without blood [death]. ¹⁹First, Moses told all the people every commandment in the law. Next he took the blood of calves and mixed it with water. Then he used red wool and a branch of hyssop to sprinkle the blood and water on the book of the law and on all the people. ²⁰He said, “This is the blood which begins the agreement that God commanded you to obey.” ²¹In the same way, Moses sprinkled the blood on the tent and over all the things used in worship. ²²The law says that almost everything must be made clean by blood. And sins cannot be forgiven without blood [death].

Christ's Sacrifice Takes Away Sins

²³So the copies of the real things in heaven had to be made clean by animal sacrifices. But the real things in heaven need much better sacrifices. ²⁴For Christ did not go into the Most Holy Place^a made by men. It is only a copy of the real one. He went into heaven itself. He is there now before God to help us. ²⁵The high priest enters the Most Holy Place once every year. He takes with him blood that is not his own blood. But Christ did not go into heaven to offer himself many times. ²⁶Then

12, 24^a Or *holy of holies*.

he would have had to suffer many times since the world was made. But Christ came only once and for all time. He came at just the right time to take away all sin by sacrificing himself.

²⁷Everyone must die once. After a person dies, he is judged.

²⁸So Christ was offered as a sacrifice one time to take away the sins of many people. And he will come a second time, but not to offer himself for sin. He will come again to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

Christ's Sacrifice Makes Us Perfect

10 The law is only an unclear picture of the good things coming in the future. It is not a perfect picture of the real things. The people under the law offered the same sacrifices every year. These sacrifices can never make perfect those who come near to worship. ²If the law could make them perfect, the sacrifices would have already stopped. The worshipers would be made clean, and they would no longer feel guilty for their sins. ³These sacrifices remind them of their sins every year. ⁴For it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

⁵So when Christ came into the world, he said:

"You [God] do not want sacrifices and offerings,
but you have prepared a body for me.

⁶You are not pleased with the sacrifices
of animals burned.

And you are not pleased with sacrifices
to take away sins.

⁷Then I said, 'Here I am, God.

It is written about me in the book of the law.

I have come to do what you want.'"

Psalms 40:6-8

⁸For he said, "You do not want sacrifices and offerings, and you are not pleased with them. You are not pleased with animals burned or with sacrifices to take away sins." (These are all sacrifices that the law commands.) ⁹Then he said, "Here I am, God. I have come to do what you want." So God ends the first system of sacrifices so that he can set up the new system. ¹⁰Jesus Christ did what God wanted him to do. And because of this, we are made holy through the sacrifice of his body. Christ made this sacrifice only once, and for all time.

¹¹Every day the priests stand and do their religious service. Again and again they offer the same sacrifices. But those sacrifices can never take away sins. ¹²But Christ offered one sacrifice for sins, and it is good forever. Then he sat down at the right side of God. ¹³And now Christ waits there for his enemies to be put under his power.^a ¹⁴With one sacrifice he made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

¹⁵The Holy Spirit also tells us about this. First he says:

¹⁶“This is the agreement I will make with my people
in the future, says the Lord.

I will put my laws in their hearts.

I will write them on their minds.”

Jeremiah 31:33

¹⁷Then he says:

“I will forgive their sins

and the evil things they do—

I will never remember them again.”

Jeremiah 31:34

¹⁸And when these have been forgiven, there is no more need for a sacrifice for sins.

Let Us Come Near to God

¹⁹So, brothers, we are completely free to enter the Most Holy Place.^b We can do this because of the blood [death] of Jesus.

²⁰We can enter through a new way that Jesus opened for us. It is a living way. It leads through the curtain—Christ’s body. ²¹And we have a great priest over God’s house. ²²So let us come near to God with a sincere heart and a sure faith. We have been cleansed and made free from feelings of guilt. And our bodies have been washed with pure water. ²³Let us hold firmly to the hope that we have confessed. We can trust God to do what he promised.

Let Us Help Each Other

²⁴Let us think about each other and help each other to show love and do good deeds. ²⁵You should not stay away from the church meetings, as some are doing. But you should meet together and encourage each other. Do this more and more as you see the Day coming.

^{13a} Or *to be made a footstool for his feet*. ^{19b} Or *holy of holies*.

Do not Turn Away from Christ

²⁶If we decide to go on sinning after we have learned the truth, there is no longer any sacrifice for sins. ²⁷There is nothing but fear in waiting for the judgment and the angry fire that will destroy all those who live against God. ²⁸Any person who refused to obey the law of Moses was found guilty from the proof given by two or three witnesses. He was put to death without mercy. ²⁹So what do you think should be done to a person who tramples on the Son of God? He looks at the blood of the agreement (the blood that made him holy) as no different from other men's blood. He insults the Spirit of God's grace. Surely he should have a much worse punishment. ³⁰We know that God said, "I will punish those who do wrong; I will repay them."^a And he also said, "The Lord will judge his people."^b ³¹It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Do not Lose the Courage and Joy You Had

³²Remember those days in the past when you first learned the truth. You had a hard struggle with many sufferings, but you continued strong. ³³Sometimes you were hurt and persecuted before crowds of people. And sometimes you shared with those who were being treated that way. ³⁴You helped the prisoners. And you even had joy when all that you owned was taken from you. You were joyful because you knew that you had something better and more lasting.

³⁵So do not lose the courage that you had in the past. It has a great reward. ³⁶You must hold on, so you can do what God wants and receive what he has promised. ³⁷For in a very short time,

"The One who is coming will come.

He will not be late.

³⁸The person who is right with me [God]
will have life because of his faith.

But if he turns back with fear,

I will not be pleased with him."

Habakkuk 2:3-4

³⁹But we are not those who turn back and are lost. We are people who have faith and are saved.

^{30a} Deuteronomy 32:35. ^{30b} Psalm 135:14.

Faith

11 Faith means being sure of the things we hope for. And faith means knowing that something is real even if we do not see it. ²People who lived in the past became famous because of faith.

³It is by faith we understand that the whole world was made by God's command. This means that what we see was made by something that cannot be seen.

⁴It was by faith that Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. God said he was pleased with the gifts Abel offered. So God called Abel a good man because of his faith. Abel died, but through his faith he is still speaking.

⁵It was by faith that Enoch was taken away. He never died. He could not be found, because God had taken him away. Before he was taken, the Scripture says that he was a man who pleased God. ⁶Without faith no one can please God. Anyone who comes to God must believe that he is real and that he rewards those who truly want to find him.

⁷It was by faith Noah heard God's warnings about things that he could not yet see. He obeyed God and built a large boat to save his family. By his faith, Noah showed that the world was wrong. And he became one of those who are made right with God through faith.

⁸It was by faith Abraham obeyed God's call to go to another place that God promised to give him. He left his own country, not knowing where he was to go. ⁹It was by faith that he lived in the country God promised to give him. He lived there like a visitor who did not belong. He lived in tents with Isaac and Jacob, who had received that same promise from God. ¹⁰Abraham was waiting for the city that has real foundations—the city planned and built by God.

¹¹He was too old to have children, and Sarah was not able to have children. It was by faith that Abraham was made able to become a father. Abraham trusted God to do what he had promised. ¹²This man was so old that he was almost dead. But from him came as many descendants as there are stars in the sky. They are as many as the grains of sand on the seashore that cannot be counted.

¹³All these great men died in faith. They did not get the

things that God promised. But they saw them coming far in the future and were glad. They said that they were like visitors and strangers on earth. ¹⁴When people say such things, they show that they are looking for a country that will be their own country. ¹⁵If they had been thinking about that country they had left, they could have gone back. ¹⁶But they were waiting for a better country—a heavenly country. So God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

¹⁷It was by faith that Abraham offered his son Isaac as a sacrifice. God made the promises to Abraham, but God tested him. And Abraham was ready to offer his own son as a sacrifice.

¹⁸God had said, "Through Isaac you will have descendants."

¹⁹Abraham believed that God could raise the dead. And really, it was as if Abraham got Isaac back from death.

²⁰It was by faith that Isaac blessed the future of Jacob and Esau. ²¹It was by faith that Jacob blessed each one of Joseph's sons. He did this while he was dying. He was leaning on his rod and worshipping God.

²²It was by faith that Joseph spoke about the Israelites leaving Egypt while he was dying. He told them what to do with his body.

²³It was by faith that Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born. They saw that Moses was a beautiful baby, and they were not afraid to disobey the king's order.

²⁴It was by faith that Moses, when he grew up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. ²⁵He chose to suffer with God's people instead of enjoying sin for a short time. ²⁶He thought that it was better to suffer for the Christ^a than to have all the treasures of Egypt. He was looking only for God's reward. ²⁷It was by faith that Moses left Egypt. He was not afraid of the king's anger. Moses continued strong as if he could see the God that no one can see. ²⁸It was by faith that Moses prepared the Passover and sprinkled the blood. It was sprinkled so that the destroyer would not kill the firstborn sons of Israel.

²⁹It was by faith that the people crossed the Red Sea as if it were dry land. The Egyptians also tried to do it, but they were drowned.

³⁰It was by faith that the walls of Jericho fell. They fell after

^{26a} Or *Messiah*.

the people had marched around the walls of Jericho for seven days.

³¹It was by faith that Rahab, the prostitute, welcomed the spies and was not killed with those who refused to obey God.

³²Do I need to give more examples? I do not have time to tell you about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets. ³³Through their faith they defeated kingdoms. They did what was right, and received what God promised. They shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴stopped great fires, and were saved from being killed with swords. They were weak, and yet were made strong. They were powerful in battle and defeated other armies. ³⁵Women received their dead relatives raised back to life. Others were tortured and refused to accept their freedom. They did this so that they could be raised from death to a better life. ³⁶Some were laughed at and beaten. Others were tied up and put into prison. ³⁷They were killed with stones and they were cut in half. They were killed with swords. Some wore the skins of sheep and goats. They were poor, persecuted, and treated badly. ³⁸The world was not good enough for them! They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and holes in the earth.

³⁹All these people are known for their faith. But none of them received what God had promised. ⁴⁰God planned to give us something better. Then they would be made perfect, but only together with us.

We Should Also Follow Jesus' Example

12 So we have many people around us [whose lives tell us what faith means]. So let us run the race that is before us and never give up. We should remove anything that would get in the way. And we should remove the sin that so easily catches us. ²Let us look only to Jesus. He is the one who began our faith, and he makes it perfect. He suffered death on the cross. But he accepted the shame of the cross as if it were nothing. He did this because of the joy that God put before him. And now he is sitting at the right side of God's throne. ³Think about Jesus. He held on patiently while sinful men were doing evil things against him. Look at Jesus' example so that you will not get tired and stop trying.

God Is like a Father Who Punishes His Children

⁴You are struggling against sin, but your struggles have not yet caused you to be killed. ⁵You have forgotten his encouraging words for his sons:

“My son, do not think it is worth nothing
when the Lord punishes you,
and do not stop trying when the Lord corrects
you,

⁶The Lord punishes everyone that he loves,
and he punishes everyone
he accepts as a son.”

Proverbs 3:11-12

⁷So accept your sufferings as if they were a father’s punishment. God does these things to you like a father punishing his sons. All sons are punished by their fathers. ⁸If you are never punished (and every son must be punished), you are not true children and not really sons. ⁹We have all had fathers here on earth who punished us, and we respected our fathers. So it is even more important that we accept punishment from the Father of our spirits. If we do this, we will have life. ¹⁰Our fathers on earth punished us for a short time in the way they thought was best. But God punishes us to help us, so that we can become holy as he is. ¹¹We do not enjoy punishment. It is painful. But later, after we have learned from being punished, we have peace, because we start living in the right way.

Be Careful How You Live

¹²You have become weak. So make yourselves strong again. ¹³Live in the right way so that you will be saved and your weakness will not cause you to be lost.

¹⁴Try to live in peace with all people. And try to live free from sin. If anyone’s life is not holy, he will never see the Lord. ¹⁵Be careful that no one fails to get God’s grace. Be careful that no one becomes like a bitter weed growing among you. A person like that can ruin all of you. ¹⁶Be careful that no one is guilty of sexual sin. And be careful that no person is like Esau and never thinks about God. Esau was the oldest son and he would have received everything from his father. But Esau sold all that for a single meal. ¹⁷You remember that after Esau did this, he wanted to get his father’s blessing. He wanted this blessing so much

that he cried. But his father refused to give him the blessing, because Esau could find no way to change what he had done.

¹⁸You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire. You have not come to darkness, sadness and storms. ¹⁹You have not come to the noise of a trumpet nor to the sound of a voice. When the people of Israel heard the voice, they begged not to have to hear another word. ²⁰They did not want to hear the command: "If anything, even an animal, touches the mountain, it must be killed with stones."^a ²¹What they saw was so terrible that Moses said, "I am shaking with fear."^b

²²But you have come to Mount Zion. You have come to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands of angels gathered together with joy. ²³You have come to the meeting of God's firstborn children. Their names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all people. And you have come to the spirits of good people who have been made perfect. ²⁴You have come to Jesus—the One who made the new agreement. You have come to the sprinkled blood [of Jesus] that has a better message than the blood of Abel.

²⁵So be careful and do not refuse to listen when God speaks. They [the Israelites] refused to listen to him when he warned them on earth. And they did not escape. Now God is warning us from heaven. So it will be worse for us if we refuse to listen to him. ²⁶When he spoke before, his voice shook the earth. But now he has promised, "Once again I will shake the earth. But I will also shake heaven."^c ²⁷The words "once again" clearly show us that everything that was made will be destroyed. These are the things that can be shaken. They will be destroyed in order that the things that cannot be shaken will remain.

²⁸So let us be thankful because we have a kingdom that cannot be shaken. We should worship God in a way that pleases him. So let us worship him with respect and fear, ²⁹because our God is like a fire that can destroy.

13 Keep on loving each other as brothers. ²Remember to welcome strangers into your homes. Some people have done this and have welcomed angels without knowing it. ³Do not forget those who are in prison. Remember them as if you

^{20a} Exodus 19:12-13. ^{21b} Deuteronomy 9:19. ^{26c} Haggai 2:6.

were in prison with them. Remember those who are suffering as if you were suffering with them.

⁴Marriage should be honored by everyone. Husband and wife should keep their marriage pure. God will judge guilty those who take part in sexual sins. ⁵Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be satisfied with what you have. God has said,

“I will never leave you;
I will never run away from you.”

Deuteronomy 31:6

⁶So we can feel sure and say,

“The Lord is my helper;
I will not be afraid.

What can man do to me?”

Psalms 118:6

⁷Remember your leaders. They taught God’s message to you. Remember how they lived and died, and copy their faith. ⁸Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

⁹Do not let all kinds of strange teachings lead you into the wrong way. Your hearts should be strengthened by God’s grace, not by obeying rules about foods. Obeying such rules does not help anyone.

¹⁰We have a sacrifice.^a But the priests who serve in the tent cannot eat from it. ¹¹The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place,^b and he offers this blood for sins. But the bodies of the animals are burned outside the camp. ¹²So Jesus also suffered outside the city. He died to make his people holy with his own blood [death]. ¹³So let us go to Jesus outside the camp. We should accept the same shame that Jesus had.

¹⁴Here on earth we do not have a city that lasts forever. But we are looking for the city that we will have in the future. ¹⁵So through Jesus let us always offer our sacrifice to God. This sacrifice is our praise, coming from lips that speak his name. ¹⁶Do not forget to do good to others and to share with them what you have. These are the sacrifices that please God.

¹⁷Obey your leaders and be under their authority. These men are watching over you as men who must give account [to God]. Obey them so that they will do this work with joy, not sadness. It will not help you to make their work hard.

¹⁸Continue praying for us. We feel sure about what we are

^{10a} Or an altar. ^{11b} Or holy of holies.

doing, because we always want to do the right thing. ¹⁹ And I beg you to pray that God will send me back to you soon. I want this more than anything else.

²⁰⁻²¹ I pray that the God of peace will give you every good thing you need so that you can do what he wants. God is the One who raised from death our Lord Jesus, the Great Shepherd of the sheep. God raised him because of his blood [death]. His blood made the new agreement possible, and this agreement is eternal. I pray that God, through Christ, will do in us what pleases him. And to Jesus Christ be glory forever and ever. Amen.

²² My brothers, I beg you to listen patiently to this message I have written to encourage you. This letter is not very long. ²³ I want you to know that our brother Timothy has been released. If he arrives soon, we will both come to see you.

²⁴ Greet all your leaders and all of God's people. Those from Italy send greetings to you.

²⁵ God's grace be with you all.

James

1 From James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.
To all of God's people who are scattered everywhere in the world:

Greetings.

Faith and Wisdom

²My brothers, you will have many kinds of troubles. But when these things happen, you should be very happy. ³You know that these things are testing your faith, and this will give you the ability to endure. ⁴Let your endurance show itself perfectly in what you do. Then you will be perfect and complete. You will have everything you need. ⁵But if any of you needs wisdom, you should ask God who is generous and kind. He enjoys giving to all people, so God will give you wisdom. ⁶But when you ask God, you must believe and not doubt. Anyone who doubts is like a wave in the sea. The wind blows the wave up and down. A person who doubts is like that wave. ⁷⁻⁸He who doubts is thinking two different things at the same time. He cannot decide about anything he does. A person like that should not think that he will receive anything from the Lord.

True Riches

⁹If a brother is poor, he should be proud because God has lifted him up. ¹⁰If he is rich, he should be proud because God has made him low. The rich person will die like a wildflower in the grass. ¹¹The sun rises and becomes hotter and hotter. The

heat makes the plants very dry and the flower falls off. The flower was beautiful, but now it is dead. It is the same with a rich person. While he is still taking care of his business, he will die.

Temptation Does not Come from God

¹²When a person is tempted and still continues strong, he will be blessed. After he has proved his faith, God will reward him with life forever. God promised this to all people who love him. ¹³When someone is being tempted, he should not say, "God is tempting me." Evil cannot tempt God, and God himself does not tempt anyone. ¹⁴It is the evil that a person wants that tempts him. His own evil desire leads him away and holds him. ¹⁵This desire causes sin. Then the sin grows and brings death.

¹⁶My dear brothers, do not be fooled about this. ¹⁷Everything good comes from God, and every perfect gift is from him. These good gifts come down from the Father of lights [sun, moon, stars]. God does not change like a moving shadow. ¹⁸He decided to give us life through the word of truth. He wanted us to be the most important of all the things he made.

Listening and Obeying

¹⁹My dear brothers, always be more willing to listen than to speak. Do not become angry easily. ²⁰Anger will not help you live a good life as God wants. ²¹So put out of your life every evil thing and every kind of wrong you do. Be humble and accept God's teaching that is planted in your hearts. This teaching can save your souls.

²²Do what God's teaching says; do not just listen and do nothing. When you only sit and listen, you are fooling yourselves. ²³A person who hears God's teaching and does nothing is like a man looking in a mirror. ²⁴He sees his face, then goes away and quickly forgets what he looked like. ²⁵But the person who is blessed is the one who carefully studies God's perfect law that makes people free. He continues to study it. He listens to and does not forget its teaching; he obeys it. When he does this, he is blessed.

Religion that God Accepts

²⁶A person might think he is religious. But if he says things he should not say, then he is just fooling himself. His "religion" is worth nothing. ²⁷Religion that God accepts is this: caring for orphans or widows who need help, and keeping oneself free from the world's influence. This is the kind of religion that is pure and good.

Love All People

2 My brothers, you are believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ. So never think that some people are more important than others. ²Suppose someone comes into your church meeting. He is wearing very nice clothes and a gold ring. At the same time a poor man comes in wearing ragged clothes. ³You show special attention to the one wearing nice clothes. You say, "Please, sit here in this good seat." But you say to the poor man, "Stand over there," or, "Sit on the floor by my feet!" ⁴What are you doing? You are making some people more important than others. With evil thoughts you are deciding which person is better.

⁵Listen, my dear brothers! God chose the poor in the world to have some special blessings: to be rich with faith and to receive the kingdom God promised to those who love him. ⁶But you show no respect to the poor man. And you know that the rich are the people who are always trying to control your lives. And they are the ones who take you to court. ⁷They are the ones who say bad things against the good name of the One [Jesus] who owns you.

⁸If you obey the royal law found in the Scriptures: "Love your neighbor as you love yourself,"^a then you are doing right. ⁹But if you are treating one person as if he were more important than another, then you are sinning. That royal law proves that you are guilty of breaking the law. ¹⁰A person might follow all of the law. But if he fails to obey even one command, he is guilty of breaking all the commands in that law. ¹¹He [God] who said, "Do not be guilty of adultery,"^b also said, "Do not murder."^c So if you are not guilty of adultery, but you murder some-

^{8a} Leviticus 19:18. ^{11b} Exodus 20:14 and Deuteronomy 5:18. ^{11c} Exodus 20:13 and Deuteronomy 5:17

one, then you are guilty of breaking the law. ¹²Speak and act as those who will be judged by the law that makes people free. ¹³You must show mercy to others or God will not show mercy to you when he judges you. But the person who shows mercy can stand without fear when he is judged.

Faith and Good Works

¹⁴My brothers, if someone says he has faith, but does nothing, his faith is worth nothing. Can faith like that save him? ¹⁵A brother or sister might need clothes or might need food. ¹⁶And you say to him, "God be with you! I hope you stay warm and get plenty to eat." You say this, but you do not give him what he needs. Unless you help him, your words are worth nothing. ¹⁷It is the same with faith. If faith does nothing, then that faith is dead, because it is alone.

¹⁸Someone might say, "You have faith, but I have deeds." But show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. ¹⁹You believe there is one God. Good! But the demons believe that, too! And they shake with fear.

²⁰You foolish person! Must you be shown that faith that does nothing is worth nothing?^a ²¹Abraham is our father. He was made right with God by what he did. He offered his son Isaac to God on the altar. ²²So you see that Abraham's faith and his actions worked together. His faith was made perfect by what he did. ²³This shows the full meaning of the Scripture that says: "Abraham believed God, and God accepted his faith. That faith made Abraham right with God."^b And Abraham was called "God's friend."^c ²⁴So you see that a person is made right with God by what he does. He cannot be made right by faith only.

²⁵Another example is Rahab. She was a prostitute, but she was made right with God by what she did. She welcomed the spies into her home and helped them escape by a different way.

²⁶A person's body that does not have a spirit is dead. It is the same with faith—faith that does nothing is dead!

Controlling the Things We Say

3 My brothers, not many of you should become teachers. You know that we who teach will be judged more strictly than

^{20a} Or *faith without works is dead*. ^{23b} Genesis 15:6. ^{23c} 2 Chronicles 20:7 and Isaiah 41:8.

others. ²We all make many mistakes. If there were a person who never said anything wrong, he would be perfect. He would be able to control his whole body, too. ³We put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us. We can control their whole bodies. ⁴It is the same with ships. A ship is very big, and it is pushed by strong winds. But a very small rudder controls that big ship. The man who controls the rudder decides where the ship will go, and it goes where the man wants.

⁵It is the same with the tongue. It is a small part of the body, but it boasts about doing great things.

A big forest fire can be started with only a little flame. ⁶And the tongue is like a fire. It is a whole world of evil among the parts of our bodies. The tongue spreads its evil through the whole body. It starts a fire that influences all of life. The tongue gets this fire from hell. ⁷People can tame every kind of wild animal, bird, reptile, and fish, and they have tamed them. ⁸But no one can tame the tongue. It is wild and evil and full of poison that can kill. ⁹We use our tongues to praise our Lord and Father, but then we curse people. And God made them like himself. ¹⁰Praises and curses come from the same mouth! My brothers, this should not happen. ¹¹Do good and bad water flow from the same spring? ¹²My brothers, can a fig tree make olives? Can a grapevine make figs? No! And a well of salty water cannot give good water.

True Wisdom

¹³Is there anyone among you who is truly wise and understanding? Then he should show his wisdom by living right. He should do good deeds with humility. A wise person does not boast. ¹⁴But if you are selfish and have bitter jealousy in your hearts, you have no reason to boast. Your boasting is a lie that hides the truth. ¹⁵That kind of "wisdom" does not come from God. That "wisdom" comes from the world. It is not spiritual. It is from the devil. ¹⁶Where there are jealousy and selfishness, there will be confusion and every kind of evil. ¹⁷But the wisdom that comes from God is like this: First, it is pure. Then it is also peaceful, gentle, and easy to please. This wisdom is always ready to help those who are troubled and to do good for others. This wisdom is always fair and honest. ¹⁸When people work for

peace in a peaceful way, they receive the good result of their right living.

Give Yourself to God

4 Do you know where your fights and arguments come from? They come from the selfish desires that make war within you. ²You want things, but you do not have them. So you are ready to kill and are jealous of other people. But you still cannot get what you want. So you argue and fight. You do not get what you want because you do not ask. ³Or when you ask, you do not receive because the reason you ask is wrong. You want things only so that you can use them for your own pleasures. ⁴You people are not faithful to God! You should know that loving the world is the same as hating God. So if a person wants to be a friend of the world, he makes himself God's enemy. ⁵Do you think the Scripture means nothing when it says, "The Spirit that lives in us wants us for himself alone"? ⁶But God gives even more grace, as the Scripture says, "God is against the proud, but he gives grace to the humble."^b ⁷So give yourselves to God. Stand against the devil, and the devil will run away from you. ⁸Come near to God, and God will come near to you. You are sinners. So clean sin out of your lives.^c You are trying to follow God and the world at the same time. Make your thinking pure. ⁹Be sad, cry, and weep! Change your laughter into crying. Change your joy into sadness. ¹⁰Be humble before the Lord, and he will make you great.

You Are not the Judge

¹¹Brothers, do not speak against each other. If you speak against your brother or judge him, then you are speaking against the law and judging the law. And when you are judging the law, you are not a follower of the law. You have become a judge! ¹²God is the only One who makes laws, and he is the only Judge. He is the only One who can save and destroy. So it is not right for you to judge your neighbor.

Let God Plan Your Life

¹³Some of you say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to some

^{5a} Exodus 20:5 possibly. ^{6b} Proverbs 3:34. ^{8c} Or *So wash your hands*.

city. We will stay there a year, do business, and make money.”
¹⁴But you do not know what will happen tomorrow! Your life is like a mist. You can see it for a short time, but then it goes away.
¹⁵So you should say, “If the Lord wants, we will live and do this or that.” ¹⁶But now you are proud and you boast. All of this boasting is wrong. ¹⁷And when a person knows the right thing to do, but does not do it, then he is sinning.

Selfish Rich People Will Be Punished

5 You rich people, listen! Cry and be very sad because of the trouble that will come to you. ²Your riches will rot and your clothes will be eaten by moths. ³Your gold and silver will rust, and rust will be a proof that you were wrong. It will eat your bodies like fire. You saved your treasure for the last days. ⁴Men worked in your fields, but you did not pay them. They harvested your crops and are crying out against you, and now the Lord who rules all^a has heard their cries. ⁵Your life on earth was full of rich living. You pleased yourselves with everything you wanted. You made yourselves fat, like an animal ready for the day of slaughter.^b ⁶You showed no mercy to the innocent man. You murdered him. He cannot stand against you.

Be Patient

⁷Brothers, be patient until the Lord comes again. A farmer is patient. He waits for his valuable crop to grow from the earth. He waits patiently for it to receive the first rain and the last rain. ⁸You, too, must be patient. Do not give up hope. The Lord is coming soon. ⁹Brothers, do not complain against one another. If you do not stop complaining, you will be judged guilty. And the Judge is ready to come! ¹⁰Brothers, follow the example of the prophets, who spoke for the Lord. They suffered many hard things, but they were patient. ¹¹We say they are happy because they were able to do this. You have heard about Job's endurance. You know that after all his trouble, the Lord helped him. This shows that the Lord is full of mercy and is kind.

Be Careful What You Say

¹²My brothers, it is very important that you not use an oath

^{4a} Or Lord Sabaoth. ^{5b} Or You fattened your hearts for the day of slaughter.

when you make a promise. Do not use the name of heaven, earth, or anything else to prove what you say. When you mean yes, say only "yes." When you mean no, say only "no." Do this so that you will not be judged guilty.

The Power of Prayer

¹³If one of you is having troubles, he should pray. If one of you is happy, he should sing praises. ¹⁴If one of you is sick, he should call the church's elders. The elders should pour oil on him in the name of the Lord and pray for him. ¹⁵And the prayer that is said with faith will make the sick person well. The Lord will heal him. And if he has sinned, God will forgive him. ¹⁶Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other. Do this so that God can heal you. When a good man prays, great things happen. ¹⁷Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years! ¹⁸Then Elijah prayed again, and the rain came down from the sky, and the land grew crops again.

Saving a Soul

¹⁹My brothers, one of you may wander away from the truth, and someone may help him to come back. ²⁰Remember this: Anyone who brings a sinner back from the wrong way will save that sinner's soul from death. By doing this, he will cause many sins to be forgiven.

1 Peter

1 From Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ.
To God's chosen people who are away from their homes—
scattered all around the areas of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia,
Asia, and Bithynia. ²God planned long ago to choose you by
making you his holy people. Making you holy is the Spirit's
work. God wanted you to obey him and to be made clean by
the blood [death] of Jesus Christ. Grace and peace be yours
more and more.

A Living Hope

³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
God has great mercy, and because of his mercy he gave us a
new life. He gave us a living hope because Jesus Christ rose
from death. ⁴Now we hope for the blessings God has for his
children. These blessings are kept for you in heaven. They can-
not be destroyed or be spoiled or lose their beauty. ⁵God's
power protects you through your faith, and it keeps you safe
until your salvation comes. That salvation is ready to be given
to you at the end of time. ⁶This makes you very happy. But now
for a short time different kinds of troubles may have to come ⁷to
prove that your faith is pure. This purity of faith is worth more
than gold. Gold can be proved to be pure by fire, but gold will
ruin. But the purity of your faith will bring you praise and glory
and honor when Jesus Christ comes again. ⁸You have not seen
Christ, but still you love him. You cannot see him now, but you
believe in him. You are filled with a joy that cannot be explained.

And that joy is full of glory. ⁹Your faith has a goal, to save your souls. And you are receiving that goal—your salvation.

¹⁰The prophets searched carefully and tried to learn about this salvation. They spoke about the grace that was coming to you. ¹¹The Spirit of Christ was in the prophets. And the Spirit was telling about the sufferings that would happen to Christ and about the glory that would come after those sufferings. The prophets tried to learn about what the Spirit was showing them. They tried to learn when those things would happen and what the world would be like at that time. ¹²It was shown to them that their service was not for themselves. It was for you. They were serving you when they told about the truths you have now heard. The men who preached the Good News to you told you those things. They did it with the help of the Holy Spirit that was sent from heaven. These are truths that even the angels want very much to know about.

A Call to Holy Living

¹³So prepare your minds for service and have self-control. All your hope should be for the gift of grace that will be yours when Jesus Christ comes again. ¹⁴In the past you did not understand, so you did the evil things you wanted. But now you are children who obey. So do not live as you lived in the past. ¹⁵But be holy in all that you do, just as God is holy. God is the One who called you. ¹⁶It is written: “Be holy, because I [God] am holy.”^a

¹⁷You pray to God and call him Father. And this Father judges each man’s work equally. So while you are here on earth, you should live with respect for God. ¹⁸You know that in the past you were living in a worthless way. You got that way of living from the people who lived before you. But you were saved from that useless life. You were bought, but not with something that ruins like gold or silver. ¹⁹You were bought with the precious blood [death] of Christ—a pure and perfect lamb. ²⁰Christ was chosen before the world was made, but he was shown to the world in these last times for you. ²¹You believe in God through Christ. God raised Christ from death and gave him glory. So your faith and your hope are in God.

^{16a} Leviticus 11:45; 19:3; 20:7.

²²Now you have made yourselves pure by obeying the truth. Now you can have true love for your brothers. So love each other deeply—with all your heart.” ²³You have been born again. This new life did not come from something that dies, but from something that cannot die. You were born again through God’s living message that continues forever. ²⁴For,

“All people are like the grass,
and all their glory is like the flower on the grass.
The grass dies,
and the flower falls,

²⁵but the word of God will live forever.” *Isaiah 40:6-8*
And this is the word that was preached to you.

The Living Stone and the Holy Nation

2 So then, get rid of all evil and all lying. Do not be a hypocrite. Do not be jealous or speak evil of others. Put all these things out of your life. ²Be like babies that are newly born. Be thirsty for the pure milk [teaching] that feeds your spirit. By drinking it you can grow up and be saved. ³For you have already tasted the goodness of the Lord.

⁴Come to him, the living stone [Jesus]. The people did not want this stone, but he was the stone God chose. To God he was worth much. ⁵You also are like living stones. Let yourselves be used to build a spiritual temple—to be holy priests who offer spiritual sacrifices to God. He will accept those sacrifices through Jesus Christ. ⁶The Scripture says:

“Look, I have chosen a precious cornerstone,
and I lay that stone [Jesus] in Zion;
the person who trusts in him will never be
ashamed.”

Isaiah 28:16

⁷This stone is worth much to you who believe. But to the people who do not believe, he is

“the stone that the builders did not want.
This stone became the most important stone.”

Psalms 118:22

⁸To people who do not believe, he is
“a stone that makes them stumble,
a stone that makes them fall.”

Isaiah 8:14

^{22a} Some early Greek copies read *from a pure heart*.

They stumble because they do not obey what God says. This is what God planned to happen to them.

⁹But you are chosen people. You are the King's priests. You are a holy nation. You are people who belong to God. God chose you to tell about the wonderful things he has done. He called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰At one time you were not God's people, but now you are his people. In the past you had never received mercy, but now you have received God's mercy.

Live for God

¹¹Dear friends, you are like visitors and strangers in this world. So I beg you to stay away from the evil things your bodies want to do. These things fight against your soul. ¹²People who do not believe are living all around you. They might say that you are doing wrong. So live good lives. Then they will see the good deeds you do, and they will give glory to God on the day when Christ comes again.

Obey Every Human Authority

¹³Obey the people who have authority in this world. Do this for the Lord. Obey the king, who is the highest authority. ¹⁴And obey the leaders who are sent by the king. They are sent to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right. ¹⁵So when you do good, you stop foolish people from saying stupid things about you. This is what God wants. ¹⁶Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as an excuse to do evil. Live as servants of God. ¹⁷Honor all people. Love the brothers and sisters of God's family. Fear God. Honor the king.

The Example of Christ's Suffering

¹⁸Slaves, accept the authority of your masters. Do this with all respect. You should obey masters who are good and kind, and you should obey masters who are bad. ¹⁹A person might have to suffer even when he has done nothing wrong. But if he thinks of God and bears the pain, this pleases God. ²⁰If you are punished for doing wrong, there is no reason to praise you for bearing punishment. But if you suffer for doing good, and you

are patient, then that pleases God. ²¹That is what you were called to do. Christ suffered for you. He gave you an example to follow. So you should do as he did.

²²“He did no sin,

and no lies were found in his mouth.”

Isaiah 53:9

²³People insulted Christ, but he did not answer back with insults. Christ suffered, but he did not threaten. He let God take care of him. God is the One who judges rightly. ²⁴Christ carried our sins in his body on the cross. He did this so that we would stop living for sin and start living for what is right. By his [Christ's] wounds you were healed. ²⁵You were like sheep that went the wrong way, but now you have come back to the Shepherd and Protector of your souls.

Wives and Husbands

3 In the same way you wives should accept the authority of your husbands. Then, if some husbands have not obeyed God's teaching they will be persuaded to believe. You will not need to say a word to them. They will be persuaded by the way their wives live. ²Your husbands will see the pure lives that you live with respect for God. ³It is not fancy hair, gold jewelry, or fine clothes that should make you beautiful. ⁴Your beauty should come from within you—the beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit. This beauty will never disappear and it is worth very much to God. ⁵It was the same with the holy women who lived long ago and followed God. They made themselves beautiful in this way. They accepted the authority of their husbands. ⁶Sarah obeyed Abraham, her husband, and called him her master. And you women are true children of Sarah if you always do what is right and are not afraid.

⁷In the same way, you husbands should live with your wives in an understanding way. You should show respect to them. They are weaker than you. But God gives them the same blessing that he gives you—the grace that gives true life. Do this so that nothing will stop your prayers.

Suffering for Doing Right

⁸Finally, all of you should live together in peace. Try to understand each other. Love each other like brothers. Be kind and

humble. ⁹Do not do wrong to a person to pay him back for doing wrong to you. Or do not insult someone to pay him back for insulting you. But bless that person. Do this, because you yourselves were called to receive a blessing. ¹⁰For:

“Whoever wants to love life
and wants to enjoy good days
must stop speaking evil,
and he must stop telling lies.

¹¹He must stop doing evil and do good;
he should look for peace and try to get it.

¹²The Lord sees the good people,
and listens to their prayers;
but the Lord is against those
who do evil.”

Psalm 34:12-16

¹³If you are always trying to do good, no one can really hurt you. ¹⁴But you may suffer for doing right. Even if that happens, you are blessed. “Do not be afraid of men and do not worry.”^a

¹⁵But keep the Lord Christ holy in your hearts. Always be ready to answer everyone who asks you to explain about the hope you have. ¹⁶But answer them in a gentle way and with respect. Always feel that you are doing right. Then, those who speak evil of your good life in Christ will be made ashamed. ¹⁷It is better to suffer for doing good than for doing wrong. Yes, it is better, if that is what God wants. ¹⁸Christ himself died for you, and that one death paid for your sins. He was not guilty, but he died for those who are guilty. He did this to bring you all to God. His body was killed, but he was made alive in the spirit. ¹⁹And in the spirit he went and preached to the spirits in prison. ²⁰These were the spirits who refused to obey God long ago in the time of Noah. God was waiting patiently for them while Noah was building the ark. Only a few people—eight in all—were saved by water. ²¹That water is like baptism that now saves you—not the washing of dirt from the body, but the promise made to God from a good heart. And this is because Jesus Christ was raised from death. ²²Now Jesus has gone into heaven and is at God’s right side. He rules over angels, authorities, and powers.

^{14a} Isaiah 8:12.

Changed Lives

4 Christ suffered while he was in his body. So you should strengthen yourselves with the same way of thinking Christ had. The person who has suffered in his body is finished with sin. ²So live the rest of your lives here on earth doing what God wants, not doing the evil things that people want. ³In the past you wasted too much time doing what the non-believers like to do. You were guilty of sexual sins and had evil desires. You were getting drunk, you had wild and drunken parties, and you did wrong by worshiping idols. ⁴Non-believers think it is strange that you do not do the many wild and wasteful things that they do. And so they insult you. ⁵But they will have to give account for what they have done. They must give account to the One [God] who is ready to judge the living and the dead. ⁶The Good News was preached to those who are now dead. By their dying, they were judged like all men. But the Good News was preached to them so that they could live in the spirit as God lives.

Be Good Managers of God's Gifts

⁷The time is near when all things will end. So keep your minds clear, and control yourselves. Then you will be able to pray. ⁸Most importantly, love each other deeply. Love has a way of not looking at others' sins. ⁹Open your homes to each other, without complaining. ¹⁰Each of you received a spiritual gift. God has shown you his grace in giving you different gifts. And you are like responsible servants. So be good servants and use your gifts to serve each other. ¹¹Anyone who speaks should speak words from God. The person who serves should serve with the strength that God gives. You should do these things so that in everything God will be praised through Jesus Christ. Power and glory belong to him forever and ever. Amen.

Suffering as a Christian

¹²My friends, do not be surprised at the painful things you are now suffering. These things are testing your faith. So do not think that something strange is happening to you. ¹³But you should be happy that you are sharing in Christ's sufferings.

You will be happy and full of joy when Christ comes again in glory. ¹⁴When people insult you because you follow Christ, then you are blessed. You are blessed because the glorious Spirit, the Spirit of God, is with you. ¹⁵If you suffer, it should not be for murder, theft, or any other crime, nor because you trouble other people. ¹⁶But if you suffer because you are a Christian, then do not be ashamed. You should praise God because you wear that name [Christian]. ¹⁷It is time for judgment to begin, and it will begin with God's family. If that judgment begins with us, what will happen to those people who do not obey the Good News of God? ¹⁸"It is very hard for a good person to be saved. So what will happen to the man who is against God and is full of sin?" ¹⁹So then those who suffer as God wants them to should trust their souls to him. God is the One who made them, and they can trust him. So they should continue to do what is right.

The Flock of God

5 Now I appeal to the church elders among you. I am also an elder. I myself have seen Christ's sufferings, and I will share in the glory that will be shown to us. I beg you to ²take care of God's flock that you are responsible for. Watch over it because you want to, not because you are forced to do it. That is how God wants it. Do it because you are happy to serve, not because you want money. ³Do not rule like a king over those you are responsible for. Be good examples to them. ⁴Then when the Head Shepherd [Christ] comes, you will get a crown. This crown will be glorious, and it will never lose its beauty.

⁵In the same way, younger men should be willing to be under older men. And all of you should be very humble with each other.

"God is against the proud,
but he gives grace to the humble."

Proverbs 3:34

⁶So be humble under God's powerful hand. Then he will lift you up when the right time comes. ⁷Give all your worries to him, because he cares for you.

⁸Control yourselves and be careful! The devil is your enemy, and he goes around like a roaring lion looking for someone to

^{18a} Proverbs 11:31 in the Septuagint.

eat. ⁹Refuse to give in to the devil. Stand strong in your faith. You know that your brothers all over the world are having the same sufferings you have.

¹⁰Yes, you will suffer for a short time. But after that, God will make everything right. He will make you strong. He will support you and keep you from falling. He is the God that gives all grace. He called you to share in his glory in Christ, and that glory will continue forever. ¹¹All power is his forever and ever. Amen.

Final Greetings

¹²I wrote this short letter with the help of Silas. I know that he is a faithful brother. I wrote to encourage you and to tell you that this is the true grace of God. Stand strong in that grace.

¹³The church in Babylon^a sends you greetings. They were chosen the same as you. Mark, my son, also greets you. ¹⁴Give each other a kiss of love when you meet.

Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

^{13a} Or *She in Babylon*.

2 Peter

1 From Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ.
To you who have received a faith as valuable as ours. You received that faith because our God and Savior Jesus Christ is fair and does what is right.

²Grace and peace be given to you more and more. You will have grace and peace because you truly know God and Jesus our Lord.

God Has Given Us Everything We Need

³Jesus has the power of God. His power has given us everything we need to live and to serve God. We have these things because we know him. Jesus called us by his glory and goodness. ⁴Through them, he gave us the very great and rich gifts he promised us. With those gifts you can share in being like God. And so the world will not ruin you with its evil desires.

⁵Because you have these blessings, you should try as much as you can to add these things to your lives: to your faith, add goodness; and to your goodness, add knowledge; ⁶and to your knowledge, add self-control; and to your self-control, add the ability to hold on; and to your ability to hold on, add service for God; ⁷and to your service for God, add kindness for your brothers; and to this kindness, add love. ⁸If all these things are in you and are growing, they will help you never to be useless. They will help you never to be worthless in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹But if anyone does not have these things, he cannot see clearly. He is blind. He has forgotten that he was made clean from his past sins.

¹⁰My brothers, God called you and chose you to be his. Try hard to show that you really are God's chosen people. If you do all these things, you will never fall. ¹¹And you will be given a very great welcome into the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, which continues forever.

¹²You know these things and you are very strong in the truth. But I will always help you to remember these things. ¹³I think it is right for me to help you remember while I am still living here on earth. ¹⁴I know that I must soon leave this body. Our Lord Jesus Christ has shown me that. ¹⁵I will try the best I can, so that you will always be able to remember these things even after I am gone.

We Saw Christ's Glory

¹⁶We have told you about the powerful coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. What we told you were not just clever stories that someone invented. But we saw the greatness of Jesus with our own eyes. ¹⁷Jesus heard the voice of the Greatest Glory [God]. That was when Jesus received honor and glory from God the Father. The voice said, "This is my Son, and I love him. I am very pleased with him." ¹⁸We heard that voice. It came from heaven while we were with Jesus on the holy mountain.

¹⁹This makes us more sure about the message the prophets gave. And it is good for you to follow closely what they said. Their message is like a light shining in a dark place. That light shines until the day begins and the morning star rises in your hearts. ²⁰Most importantly, you must understand this: No prophecy in the Scriptures ever comes from the prophet's own interpretation. ²¹No prophecy ever came from what a man wanted to say. But men led by the Holy Spirit spoke words from God.

False Teachers

2 There used to be false prophets among the people, just as there are now. And you will have some false teachers among you. They will teach secretly things that are wrong—teachings that will cause people to be lost. They will even refuse to accept the Master [Jesus] who bought their freedom. And so they will quickly destroy themselves. ²Many will follow

their evil ways, and say evil things about the Way of truth.

³Those false teachers only want your money. So they will use you by telling you what is not true. But God's judgment against them has been ready for a long time. And they will not escape the One who will destroy them.

⁴When angels sinned, God did not let them go free without punishment. God sent them to hell^a and put them in caves of darkness. They are being held there until the judgment. ⁵And God punished the evil people who lived long ago. He brought a flood to the world on all those who were against him. But God saved Noah and seven other people with him. Noah was a man who preached about doing what is right. ⁶And God also punished the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. He burned those cities until there was nothing left but ashes. He made those cities an example to show what will happen to those who are against God. ⁷But God saved Lot. Lot, a good man, was troubled because of the dirty lives of evil people. ⁸(Lot was a good man, but he lived with evil people every day. His good heart was hurt by the evil things that he saw and heard.) ⁹And so the Lord knows how to save those who serve him. He will save them when troubles come. And the Lord will hold evil people and punish them, while waiting for the day of judgment. ¹⁰That punishment is especially for those who live by doing the filthy things their sinful selves^b want, and for those who hate the Lord's authority.

These false teachers do anything they want, and boast about it. They are not afraid to insult the glorious angels.^c ¹¹The angels are much stronger and more powerful than false teachers. But even the angels do not accuse them with insults before the Lord. ¹²But these men insult what they do not understand. They are like animals that act without thinking—like wild animals that are born to be caught and killed. And, like wild animals, these false teachers will be destroyed. ¹³They have caused many people to suffer; so they themselves will suffer. That is their pay for what they have done. They take pleasure in doing evil things openly. So they are like dirty spots and stains among you in the meals that you eat together. ¹⁴Every time they look at a woman they want her. Their desire for sin is never satis-

^{4a} Greek, *Tartarus*. ^{10b} Or *flesh*. ^{10c} Or *the glories or the glorious ones*.

fied. They lead weak people into the trap. They have taught their hearts to be selfish. They are under a curse.¹⁴ ¹⁵These false teachers left the right road and lost their way. They followed the way that Balaam went. Balaam was the son of Beor, who loved being paid for doing wrong. ¹⁶But a donkey told Balaam that he was sinning. The donkey is an animal that cannot talk, but the donkey spoke with a man's voice and stopped the prophet's [Balaam's] madness.

¹⁷Those false teachers are like rivers that have no water. They are like clouds blown by a storm. A place in the deepest darkness has been kept for them. ¹⁸They boast with words that mean nothing. By their evil desires they lead people into the trap of sin. They lead away people who are just beginning to escape from those who live in error. ¹⁹They promise them freedom, but they themselves are not free. They are slaves of things that will be destroyed. For a person is a slave of anything that controls him. ²⁰They were made free from the evil in the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. But if they return to evil things and are controlled by them, then it is worse for them than it was before. ²¹Yes, it would be better for them to have never known the right way. That would be better than to know the right way and then to turn away from the holy teaching that was given to them. ²²What they did is like this true saying: "When a dog vomits, he comes back to his vomit."^a And, "After a pig is washed, it goes back and rolls in the mud."

Jesus Will Come Again

3 My friends, this is the second letter I have written to you. I wrote both letters to you to help your honest minds remember. ²I want you to remember the words that the holy prophets spoke in the past. And remember the command that our Lord and Savior gave us through your apostles. ³It is important for you to understand what will happen in the last days. People will laugh. They will live doing the evil things they want to do. ⁴They will say, "He [Jesus] promised to come again. Where is he? Our fathers have died, but the world continues the way it has been since it was made."^b ⁵But they do not want to remember what happened long ago. God spoke and made heaven and

^{14a} Or children of a curse. ^{22b} Proverbs 26:11.

earth. He made the earth from water and with water. ⁶Then the world was flooded and destroyed with water. ⁷And that same word is keeping heaven and earth that we have now. They are being kept to be destroyed by fire. They are being kept for the day of judgment and the destruction of all who are against God.

⁸But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: To the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years is as one day. ⁹The Lord is not slow in doing what he promised—the way some people understand slowness. But God is being patient with you. He does not want anyone to be lost, but he wants everyone to change his heart and life.

¹⁰But the Day the Lord comes again will be like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a loud noise. Everything in the heavens will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be burned up.^a ¹¹In that way everything will be destroyed. So what kind of people should you be? You should live holy lives and serve God. ¹²You should wait for the Day of God and look forward to the coming of that Day. When it comes, the heavens will be destroyed with fire, and everything in the heavens will melt with heat. ¹³But God made a promise to us. And we are waiting for what he promised—a new heaven and a new earth where goodness lives.

¹⁴Dear friends, we are waiting for this to happen. So try as hard as you can to be without sin and without fault. Try to be at peace with God. ¹⁵Remember that we are saved because our Lord is patient. Our dear brother Paul told you the same thing when he wrote to you with the wisdom that God gave him. ¹⁶Paul writes about this in all his letters. Sometimes there are things in Paul's letters that are hard to understand. Some people explain these things falsely; they are ignorant and weak in faith. They also falsely explain the other Scriptures, but they are destroying themselves by doing that.

¹⁷Dear friends, you already know about this. So be careful. Do not let those evil people lead you away by the wrong they do. Be careful so that you will not fall from your strong faith. ¹⁸But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Glory be to him now and forever! Amen.

^{10a} Many Greek copies say, *will be found*. One copy says, *will disappear*.

1 John

1 We write you now about something that has existed since before the world began:

This we heard,
we saw with our own eyes,
we watched,
we touched with our hands.

We write to you about the Word [Christ] that gives life. ²That Life was shown to us. We saw it and we can give proof about it. And now we tell you about that Life that continues forever. This is the Life that was with God the Father, and God showed this Life to us. ³Now we tell you what we have seen and heard because we want you to have fellowship with us. The fellowship we share together is with God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴We write this to you so that you can be full of joy with us.

God Forgives Our Sins

⁵Here is the message we have heard from God and now tell to you: God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶So if we say that we have fellowship with God, but we continue living in darkness, then we are liars—we do not follow the truth. ⁷God is in the light, and we should live in the light, too. If we live in the light, we share fellowship with each other. And when we live in the light, the blood [death] of Jesus, God's Son, is making us clean from every sin.

⁸If we say that we have no sin, we are fooling ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹But if we confess our sins, he will forgive

our sins. We can trust God, who does what is right. He will make us clean from all the wrongs we have done. ¹⁰If we say that we have not sinned, then we make God a liar—we do not accept his teaching.

Jesus Is Our Helper

2 My dear children, I write this letter to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have Jesus Christ to help us. He is the righteous One. He defends us before God the Father. ²Jesus is the way our sins are taken away.^a And He is the way that all people can have their sins taken away, too.

³If we obey what God has told us to do, then we are sure that we truly know God. ⁴If someone says, “I know God!” but does not obey God’s commands, then he is a liar. The truth is not in him. ⁵But if someone obeys God’s teaching, then God’s love has truly arrived at its goal in him. This is how we know that we are following God: ⁶Whoever says that God lives in him must live as Jesus lived.

God Commanded Us to Love Other People

⁷My dear friends, I am not writing a new command to you. It is the same command you have had since the beginning. It is the teaching you have already heard. ⁸But I am writing a new command to you. This command is true; you can see its truth in Jesus and in yourselves. The darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.

⁹Someone says, “I am in the light.” But if he hates his brother, he is still in the darkness. ¹⁰Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him that will cause him to do wrong. ¹¹But whoever hates his brother is in darkness. He lives in darkness and does not know where he is going. The darkness has made him blind.

¹²I write to you, dear children,
because your sins are forgiven through Christ.

¹³I write to you, fathers,
because you know the One who existed from the
beginning.

I write to you, young men,

^{2a} Or he turns aside God’s wrath, taking away our sins.

because you have defeated the Evil One.

¹⁴I write to you, children,
because you know the Father.

I write to you, fathers,
because you know the One who existed from the
beginning.

I write to you, young men,
because you are strong;
the word of God lives in you,
and you have defeated the Evil One.

¹⁵Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶These are the things in the world:

wanting things to please our sinful selves,^a
wanting the sinful things we see,
being too proud of the things we have.

But none of those things comes from the Father. All of them come from the world. ¹⁷The world is passing away, and everything that people want in the world is passing away. But the person who does what God wants lives forever.

Do not Follow the Enemies of Christ

¹⁸My dear children, the end is near! You have heard that the Enemy of Christ is coming. And now many enemies of Christ are already here. So we know that the end is near. ¹⁹Those enemies of Christ were in our group, but they left us. They did not really belong with us. If they were really part of us, then they would have stayed with us. But they left. This shows that none of them really belonged with us.

²⁰You have the gift^b that the Holy One gave you. So you all know the truth.^c ²¹Why do I write to you? Do I write because you do not know the truth? No, I write this letter because you do know the truth. And you know that no lie comes from the truth.

²²So who is the liar? It is the person that says Jesus is not the Christ.^d A person who says Jesus is not the Christ is the enemy of Christ. He does not believe in the Father or in his Son.

^{16a} Or flesh. ^{20b} Or anointing. ^{20c} Some Greek copies read you know all things. ^{22d} Or Messiah.

²³If anyone does not believe in the Son, he does not have the Father. But whoever accepts the Son has the Father, too.

²⁴Be sure that you continue to follow the teaching that you heard from the beginning. If you continue in that teaching, you will stay in the Son and in the Father. ²⁵And this is what the Son promised to us—life forever.

²⁶I am writing this letter about those people who are trying to lead you into the wrong way. ²⁷Christ gave you a special gift, and you still have this gift in you. So you do not need any other teacher. The gift he gave you teaches you about everything. This gift is true, not false. So continue to live in Christ, as his gift taught you.

²⁸Yes, my dear children, live in him. If we do this, we can be without fear on the day when Christ comes back. We will not need to hide and be ashamed when he comes. ²⁹You know that Christ is righteous. So you know that all who do what is right are God's children.

We Are God's Children

3 The Father has loved us so much that we are called children of God. And we really are his children. But the people in the world do not understand that we are God's children, because they have not known him. ²Dear friends, now we are children of God. We have not yet been shown what we will be in the future. But we know that when Christ comes again, we will be like him. We will see him as he really is. ³Christ is pure. And everyone who has this hope in Christ keeps himself pure like Christ.

⁴When a person sins, he breaks God's law. Yes, sinning is the same as living against God's law. ⁵You know that Christ came to take away sins. There is no sin in him. ⁶So the person who lives in Christ does not go on sinning. If he goes on sinning, he has never really understood Christ and has never known him.

⁷Dear children, do not let anyone lead you into the wrong way. Christ is righteous. To be like Christ, a person must do what is right. ⁸The devil has been sinning since the beginning. Anyone who continues to sin belongs to the devil. The Son of God came for this: to destroy the devil's work.

⁹When God makes someone his child, that person does not go on sinning. The new life^a God gave that person stays in him. So he is not able to go on sinning, because he has become a child of God. ¹⁰So we can see who God's children are and who the devil's children are. Those who do not do what is right are not children of God. And anyone who does not love his brother is not a child of God.

We Must Love Each Other

¹¹This is the teaching you have heard from the beginning: We must love each other. ¹²Do not be like Cain who belonged to the Evil One. Cain killed his brother [Abel]. Cain killed his brother because Cain's deeds were evil and his brother's deeds were good.

¹³Brothers, do not be surprised when the people of this world hate you. ¹⁴We know that we have left death and have come into life. We know this because we love our brothers. Whoever does not love is still in death. ¹⁵Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer. And you know that no murderer has eternal life in him. ¹⁶This is how we know what love is: Jesus gave his life for us. So we should give our lives for our brothers. ¹⁷Suppose a believer is rich enough to have all that he needs. He sees his brother who is poor and does not have what he needs. What if the believer does not help the poor brother? Then the believer does not have God's love in his heart. ¹⁸My children, our love should not be only words and talk. Our love must be true love. And we should show that love by what we do.

¹⁹⁻²⁰This is the way we know that we belong to the way of truth. When our hearts make us feel guilty, we can still have peace before God. God is greater than our hearts and he knows everything.

²¹My dear friends, if we do not feel that we are doing wrong, we can be without fear when we come to God. ²²And God gives us what we ask for. We receive these things because we obey God's commands and we do what pleases him. ²³This is what God commands: that we believe in his Son Jesus Christ and that we love each other, just as he commanded. ²⁴The person

^{9a} Or his seed.

who obeys God's commands lives in God, and God lives in him. How do we know that God lives in us? We know because of the Spirit whom God gave us.

John Warns Against False Teachers

4 My dear friends, many false prophets are in the world now. So do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see if they are from God. ²This is how you can know God's Spirit: One spirit says, "I believe that Jesus is the Christ who came to earth and became a man." That Spirit is from God. ³Another spirit refuses to say this about Jesus. That spirit is not from God, but is the spirit of the Enemy of Christ. You have heard that the Enemy of Christ is coming, and now he is already in the world.

⁴My dear children, you belong to God. So you have defeated them [the false teachers] because the One [God] who is in you is greater than the one [the devil] who is in the world. ⁵And they [the false teachers] belong to the world. What they say is from the world, and the world listens to them. ⁶But we are from God, and those who know God listen to us. But those who are not from God do not listen to us. This is how we know the Spirit that is true and the spirit that is false.

Love Comes from God

⁷Dear friends, we should love each other, because love comes from God. The person who loves has become God's child and knows God. ⁸Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹This is how God showed his love to us: He sent his only Son^a into the world to give us life through him. ¹⁰True love is God's love for us, not our love for God. God sent his Son to be the way to take away our sins.

¹¹That is how much God loved us, dear friends! So we also must love each other. ¹²No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us. If we love each other, God's love has reached its goal—it is made perfect in us.

¹³We know that we live in God and God lives in us. We know this because God gave us his Spirit. ¹⁴We have seen that the Fa-

^a Or only begotten Son.

ther sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. This is what we teach. ¹⁵If someone says, "I believe that Jesus is the Son of God," then God lives in him. And he lives in God. ¹⁶And so we know the love that God has for us, and we trust that love.

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God lives in him. ¹⁷If God's love is made perfect in us, then we can be without fear on the day God judges us. We will be without fear, because in this world we are like him. ¹⁸Where God's love is, there is no fear, because God's perfect love takes away fear. It is punishment that makes a person fear. So love is not made perfect in the person who has fear.

¹⁹We love because God first loved us. ²⁰If someone says, "I love God," but hates his brother, he is a liar. He can see his brother, but he hates him. So how can he love God, whom he has never seen? ²¹And he [God] gave us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

God's Children Win Against the World

5 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ^a is God's child. The person who loves the Father also loves the Father's children. ²How do we know that we love God's children? We know because we love God and we obey his commands. ³Loving God means obeying his commands. And God's commands are not too hard for us. ⁴Everyone who is a child of God wins against the world. ⁵It is our faith that wins the victory against the world. So the one who wins against the world is the person who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

God Told Us About His Son

⁶Jesus Christ is the One who came with water and with blood. He did not come by water only. He came by both water and blood. And the Spirit says that this is true. The Spirit is the truth. ⁷So there are three witnesses that tell us [about Jesus]: ⁸the Spirit, the water, and the blood. These three witnesses agree. ⁹We believe people when they say something is true, but what God says is more important. And he has told us the truth about his own Son. ¹⁰Anyone who believes in the Son of God has the truth that God told us. Anyone who does not believe

^{1a} Or *Messiah*.

makes God a liar. He does not believe what God told us about his Son. ¹¹This is what God told us: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹²Whoever has the Son has life. But the person who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

We Have Eternal Life Now

¹³I write this letter to you who believe in the Son of God. I write so that you will know that you have eternal life now. ¹⁴We can come to God with no doubts. This means that when we ask God for anything (and this agrees with what God wants for us), then God hears us. ¹⁵God listens to us every time we ask him. So we know that he gives us what we ask from him.

¹⁶Suppose someone sees his brother sinning (sin that does not lead to death). That person should pray for his brother who is sinning. Then God will give the brother life. I am talking about people whose sin does not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death. I do not mean that a person should pray about that sin. ¹⁷Doing wrong is always sin. But there is sin that does not lead to death.

¹⁸We know that anyone who is God's child does not continue to sin. The Son of God keeps God's child safe,^a and the Evil One cannot hurt him. ¹⁹We know that we belong to God. But the Evil One controls the whole world. ²⁰And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding. Now we can know God, the One who is true. And our lives are in that true God and in his Son, Jesus Christ. He is the true God, and he is eternal life. ²¹So, dear children, keep yourselves away from false gods.

^{18 a} Or *The one who was born from God keeps him (or himself) safe.*

2 John

From the Elder.

To the chosen lady, and to her children:

I love all of you in the truth. Also, all those who know the truth love you. ²We love you because of the truth—the truth that lives in us and will be with us forever.

³Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us from God the Father and from his Son, Jesus Christ. And may we have these blessings in truth and love.

⁴I was very happy to learn that some of your children are following the way of truth, as the Father commanded us. ⁵And now, dear lady, I tell you: We should all love each other. This is not a new command. It is the same command we have had from the beginning. ⁶And loving means living the way he commanded us to live. And God's command is this: that you live a life of love. You have heard this command from the beginning.

⁷Many false teachers are in the world now. They refuse to say that Jesus Christ came to earth and became a man. If someone refuses to say this, he is a false teacher and an enemy of Christ. ⁸Be careful! Do not lose the reward that you have worked for. Be careful, so that you will receive your full reward.

⁹A person must continue to follow only the teaching of Christ. If he goes beyond Christ's teaching, then he does not have God. But if he continues following the teaching of Christ, then he has both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰If someone comes to you, but does not bring this teaching, then do not accept him into your house. Do not welcome him. ¹¹If you accept him, you are helping him with his evil work.

¹²I have much to say to you, but I do not want to use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to come visit so that we can be together and talk. That will make us very happy. ¹³The children of your chosen sister send you their love.

3 John

From the Elder.

To my dear friend Gaius whom I love in the truth:

²My dear friend, I know your soul is doing well. I pray that you are doing fine in every way and that your health is good. ³Some brothers came and told me about the truth in your life. They said that you are following the way of truth. This made me very happy. ⁴It always gives me the greatest joy when I hear that my children are following the way of truth.

⁵My dear friend, it is good that you continue to help the brothers. You are helping those that you do not even know! ⁶These brothers told the church about the love you have. Please help them to continue their trip. Help them in a way that will please God. ⁷They started out on their trip to serve Christ. They did not accept any help from those who are not believers. ⁸So we should help these brothers. And when we do, we share in their work for the truth.

⁹I wrote a letter to the church, but Diotrephes will not listen to what we say. He always wants to be their leader. ¹⁰When I come, I will talk about what Diotrephes is doing. He lies and says evil things about us, but that is not all he does. He refuses to help the brothers. He also stops those who want to help them and puts them out of the church.

¹¹My dear friend, do not follow what is bad; follow what is good. He who does what is good is from God. But he who does evil has never known God.

¹²Everyone says good things about Demetrius, and the truth

agrees with what they say. Also, we say good about him, and you know that what we say is true.

¹³I have many things I want to tell you, but I do not want to use pen and ink. ¹⁴I hope to visit you soon so that we can be together and talk. ¹⁵Peace to you. The friends here with me send their love. Please give our love to each one of the friends there.

Jude

From Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James.
To all who have been called by God. God the Father loves you, and you have been kept safe in Jesus Christ.^a

²All mercy, peace, and love be yours.

God Will Punish People Who Do Wrong

³Dear friends, I wanted very much to write to you about the salvation we all share together. But I felt the need to write to you about something else: I want to encourage you to fight hard for the faith that God gave his holy people. God gave this faith once, and it is for all time. ⁴Some people have secretly entered among you. They have already been judged guilty for the things they are doing. Long ago it was written that these people are against God. They have used the grace of our God in the wrong way—to do sinful things. They refuse to accept Jesus Christ, our only Master and Lord.

⁵I want to remind you of some things that you already know: Remember that the Lord saved his people by bringing them out of the land of Egypt. But later the Lord destroyed all those who did not believe. ⁶And remember the angels who had power but did not keep it. They left their own home. So the Lord has kept these angels in darkness, bound with everlasting chains, to be judged on the great day. ⁷Also remember the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and the other towns around them. They acted as the angels who did not obey God. Their towns were full

^{1a} Or kept for Jesus Christ.

of sexual sin and wrongdoing. They suffer the punishment of eternal fire, as an example for all to see.

⁸It is the same with these people. They are guided by dreams. They make themselves dirty with sin. They reject authority and say bad things against the glorious angels.⁹ ⁹Not even the archangel Michael did this. He argued with the devil about who would have the body of Moses. Michael did not dare to condemn the devil with insulting words. He said, "The Lord punish you."¹⁰ But these people criticize things they do not understand. They do understand some things, but they understand them not by thinking, but by feeling, the way dumb animals understand things. And these are the very things that destroy them.¹¹ It will be bad for them. They have followed the way that Cain went. To make money, they have given themselves to following the wrong way that Balaam went. They have fought against God like Korah did. And like Korah, they will be destroyed.¹² They are like dirty spots in the special meals you share together. They eat with you and have no fear. They take care of only themselves. They are clouds without rain. The wind blows them around. They are trees that have no fruit when it is time and are pulled out of the ground. So they are twice dead.¹³ They are like wild waves in the sea that make foam. These people do shameful things like the waves make foam. They are like stars that wander in the sky. The blackest darkness has been kept for them forever.

¹⁴Enoch, the seventh descendant from Adam, said this about these people: "Look, the Lord is coming with thousands and thousands of his holy angels.¹⁵ The Lord will judge every person. He is coming to judge everyone and to punish all who are against God. He will punish them for all the evil they have done against him. And he will punish the sinners who are against God. He will punish them for all the evil things they have said against him."

¹⁶These people always complain and blame others. They always do the things they want to do. They boast about themselves. The only reason they say good things about other people is to get what they want.

^{8a} Or the glories or the glorious ones.

A Warning and Things to Do

¹⁷Dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ said before. ¹⁸They said to you, "In the last times there will be people who laugh. They will do only what they want to do—things that are against God." ¹⁹These are the people who divide you. They do only what their sinful selves want. They do not have the Spirit.

²⁰But dear friends, use your most holy faith to build yourselves up strong. Pray with the Holy Spirit. ²¹Keep yourselves in God's love. Wait for the Lord Jesus Christ with his mercy to give you life forever.

²²Show mercy to people who have doubts. ²³Save them. Take them out of the fire. Show mercy mixed with fear to others. Hate even their clothes which are dirty from sin.

Praise God

²⁴He [God] is strong and can help you not to fall. He can bring you before his glory without any wrong in you and give you great joy. ²⁵He is the only God. He is the One who saves us. To him be glory, greatness, power, and authority through Jesus Christ our Lord for all time past, now, and forever. Amen.

Revelation

John Tells About This Book

1 This is the revelation of Jesus Christ. God gave this revelation to Jesus, to show his servants what must soon happen. And Jesus sent his angel to show it to his servant John. ²John has told everything that he has seen. It is the truth that Jesus Christ told him; it is the message from God. ³The one who reads the words of God's message is blessed. And the people who hear this message and do what is written in it are blessed. The time is near when all of this will happen.

John Writes Christ's Message to the Churches

⁴From John,

To the seven churches in the province of Asia:

Grace and peace to you from the One who is, and was and is coming, and from the seven spirits before his throne, ⁵and from Jesus Christ. Jesus is the faithful witness. He is first among those raised from death. He is the ruler of the kings of the earth.

He is the One who loves us. And he is the One who made us free from our sins with his blood [death]. ⁶He made us to be a kingdom of priests who serve God his Father. To Jesus Christ be glory and power forever and ever! Amen.

⁷Look, Jesus is coming with the clouds! Everyone will see him, even those who pierced him. And all peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. Yes, this will happen! Amen.

⁸The Lord God says, “I am the Alpha and the Omega.” I am the One who is and was and is coming. I am the All-Powerful.”

⁹I am John, and I am your brother. We are together in Jesus, and we share in these things: in suffering, in the kingdom, and in patient endurance. I was on the island of Patmos because I had preached God’s message and the truth about Jesus. ¹⁰On the Lord’s day the Spirit took control of me. I heard a loud voice behind me that sounded like a trumpet. ¹¹The voice said, “Write what you see and send that book to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.”

¹²I turned to see who was talking to me. When I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands. ¹³I saw someone among the lampstands who was “like a son of man.”^b He was dressed in a long robe and had a gold band around his chest. ¹⁴His head and hair were white like wool—wool that is white as snow. His eyes were like flames of fire. ¹⁵His feet were like brass that glows hot in a furnace. His voice was like the noise of flooding water. ¹⁶He held seven stars in his right hand. A sharp two-edged sword came out of his mouth. He looked like the sun shining at its brightest time.

¹⁷When I saw him, I fell down at his feet like a dead man. He put his right hand on me and said, “Do not be afraid! I am the First and the Last. ¹⁸I am the One who lives. I was dead, but look: I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades. ¹⁹So write the things you see, what is now and what will happen later. ²⁰Here is the hidden meaning of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and the seven golden lampstands that you saw: The seven lampstands are the seven churches. The seven stars are the angels^c of the seven churches.”

Christ’s Message to the Church in Ephesus

2 “Write this to the angel^d of the church in Ephesus: “The One who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands says this. ²I know what you do. You work hard, and you never give up. I know that you do not accept evil people. You have tested those who

^{8a} Alpha and omega are the first and last letters in the Greek alphabet. This means “the beginning and the end.” ^{13b} Daniel 7:13. ^{20c} Or *messengers*. ^{1d} Or *messenger*; also in verses 8 and 12.

say that they are apostles but really are not. You found that they are liars. ³You continue to endure. You have suffered for my name, and you have not given up.

⁴"But I have this against you: You have left the love you had in the beginning. ⁵So remember where you were before you fell. Change your hearts and do what you did at first. If you do not change, I will come to you and take away your lampstand from its place. ⁶But there is something you do: You hate what the Nicolaitans do, as much as I.

⁷"Everyone who has ears should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who wins the victory I will give the right to eat from the tree of life. This tree is in the garden of God."

Christ's Message to the Church in Smyrna

⁸"Write this to the angel of the church in Smyrna:

"The One who is the First and the Last says this. He is the One who died and came to life again. ⁹I know your troubles. I know that you are poor, but really you are rich! I know the bad things that some people say. They say they are Jews, but they are not Jews. They are a synagogue that belongs to Satan. ¹⁰Do not be afraid of what will happen to you. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer for ten days. But be faithful, even if you have to die. If you are faithful, I will give you the crown of life.

¹¹"Everyone who has ears should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches. He who wins the victory will not be hurt by the second death."

Christ's Message to the Church in Pergamum

¹²"Write this to the angel of the church in Pergamum:

"The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this. ¹³I know where you live. You live where Satan has his throne, but you are true to me. You did not refuse to tell about your faith in me even during the time of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was killed in your city. Your city is where Satan lives.

¹⁴"But I have a few things against you: You have some there who follow the teaching of Balaam. Balaam taught Balak how to cause the people of Israel to sin. They sinned by eating food

offered to idols and by being guilty of sexual sins. ¹⁵You also have some who follow the teaching of the Nicolaitans. ¹⁶So change your hearts and lives! If you do not, I will come to you quickly and fight against them with the sword that comes out of my mouth.

¹⁷“Everyone who has ears should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches!

“I will give the hidden manna to everyone who wins the victory. I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it. No one knows this new name except the one who receives it.”

Christ's Message to the Church in Thyatira

¹⁸“Write this to the angel^a of the church in Thyatira:

“The Son of God is saying these things. He is the One who has eyes that blaze like fire and feet like shining brass. He says this: ¹⁹I know what you do. I know about your love, your faith, your service, and your endurance. I know that you are doing more now than you did at first. ²⁰But I have this against you: You let that woman Jezebel do what she wants. She says that she is a prophetess, but she is leading my people away with her teaching. Jezebel leads them to be guilty of sexual sins and to eat food that is offered to idols. ²¹I have given her time to change her heart and turn away from her sin, but she does not want to change. ²²And so I will throw her on a bed of suffering. And all those who are guilty of adultery with her will suffer greatly. I will do this now if they do not turn away from the wrongs she does. ²³I will also kill her followers. Then all the churches will know that I am the One who knows what people feel and think. And I will repay each of you for what you have done.

²⁴“But others of you in Thyatira have not followed her teaching. You have not learned what some call Satan's deep secrets. This is what I say to you: I will not put any other burden on you. ²⁵Only continue the way you are until I come.

²⁶“I will give power to everyone who wins the victory and continues to the end to do what I want. I will give him power over the nations:

^{18a} Or messenger.

²⁷ 'He will rule them with an iron rod.

He will break them to pieces like clay pots.'

Psalm 2:9

²⁸ This is the same power I received from my Father. I will also give him the morning star. ²⁹ Everyone who has ears should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches."

Christ's Message to the Church in Sardis

3 "Write this to the angel^a of the church in Sardis: "The One who has the seven spirits^b and the seven stars says this. I know what you do. People say that you are alive, but really you are dead. ²Wake up! Make yourselves stronger while you still have something left, and before it dies completely. I have found that what you are doing is not good enough for my God. ³So do not forget what you have received and heard. Obey it. Change your hearts and lives! You must wake up, or I will come to you like a thief. And you will not know when I will come. ⁴But you have a few there in Sardis who have kept themselves clean. They will walk with me. They will wear white clothes, because they are worthy. ⁵He who wins the victory will be dressed in white clothes like them. I will not take away his name from the book of life. I will say that he belongs to me before my Father and before his angels. ⁶Everyone who has ears should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches."

Christ's Message to the Church in Philadelphia

⁷ "Write this to the angel of the church in Philadelphia:

"The One who is holy and true says this to you. He holds the key of David. When he opens something, it cannot be closed. And when he closes something, it cannot be opened. ⁸I know what you do. I have put an open door before you and no one can close it. I know that you have a little strength. But you have followed my teaching, and you were not afraid to speak my name. ⁹Listen! There is a synagogue that belongs to Satan. Those in this synagogue say they are Jews, but they are liars. They are not Jews. I will make them come before you and bow at your feet. They will know that I have loved you. ¹⁰You have followed my teaching about not giving up. So I will keep you from the time of trouble that will come to the whole world. This

^{1a} Or messenger; also in verses 5 and 7. ^{1b} Or seven-fold Spirit.

trouble will test those who live on earth.

¹¹“I am coming soon. Continue the way you are now. Then no one will take away your crown. ¹²I will make the one who wins the victory a pillar in the temple of my God. He will never have to leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God. This city is the new Jerusalem. It comes down out of heaven from my God. I will also write on him my new name. ¹³Everyone who has ears should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.”

Christ's Message to the Church in Laodicea

¹⁴“Write this to the angel^a of the church in Laodicea:

“The Amen is the One who is the faithful and true witness. He is the ruler of all that God has made. He says this: ¹⁵I know what you do. You are not hot or cold. I wish that you were hot or cold! ¹⁶But you are only warm—not hot, not cold. So I am ready to spit you out of my mouth. ¹⁷You say you are rich. You think you have become wealthy and do not need anything. But you do not know that you are really miserable, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked. ¹⁸I advise you to buy gold from me—gold made pure in fire. Then you can be truly rich. Buy from me clothes that are white. Then you can cover your shameful nakedness. Buy from me medicine to put on your eyes. Then you can truly see.

¹⁹“I correct and punish those whom I love. So be eager to do right. Change your hearts and lives. ²⁰Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he will eat with me.

²¹“He who wins the victory will sit with me on my throne. It was the same with me. I won the victory and sat down with my Father on his throne. ²²Everyone who has ears should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.”

John Sees Heaven

4 After this I looked, and there before me was an open door in heaven. And I heard the same voice that spoke to me before. It was the voice that sounded like a trumpet. The voice said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must happen

^{14a} Or messenger.

after this.”² Then the Spirit took control of me. There before me was a throne in heaven. Someone was sitting on the throne.³ The One who sat on the throne looked like precious stones, like jasper and carnelian. All around the throne was a rainbow the color of an emerald.⁴ Around the throne there were 24 other thrones. There were 24 elders sitting on the 24 thrones. The elders were dressed in white, and they had golden crowns on their heads.⁵ Lightning flashes and noises of thunder came from the throne. Before the throne there were seven lamps burning. These lamps are the seven Spirits of God.⁶ Also before the throne there was something that looked like a sea of glass. It was clear like crystal.

Around the throne, on each side, there were four living things. These living things had eyes all over them, in front and in back.⁷ The first living thing was like a lion. The second was like a calf. The third had a face like a man. The fourth was like a flying eagle.⁸ Each of these four living things had six wings. The living things were covered all over with eyes, inside and out. Day and night they never stop saying:

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God All-Powerful.

He was, he is, and he is coming.”

⁹ These living things give glory and honor and thanks to the One who sits on the throne. He is the One who lives forever and ever. And every time the living things do this, ¹⁰ the 24 elders bow down before the One who sits on the throne. The elders worship him who lives forever and ever. They put their crowns down before the throne and say:

¹¹ “Our Lord and God! You are worthy
to receive glory and honor and power.
You made all things. Everything existed
and was made because you wanted it.”

5 Then I saw a scroll in the right hand of the One sitting on the throne. The scroll had writing on both sides. It was kept closed with seven seals.² And I saw a powerful angel. He called in a loud voice, “Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?”³ But there was no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth who could open the scroll or look inside it.⁴ I cried and cried because there was no one who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside.⁵ But one of the elders said to me, “Do

not cry! The Lion [Christ] from Judah's family group has won the victory. He is David's descendant. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals."

⁶Then I saw a Lamb standing in the center of the throne with the four living things around it. The elders were also around the Lamb. The Lamb looked as if he had been killed. He had seven horns and seven eyes. These are the seven spirits^a of God that were sent into all the world. ⁷The Lamb came and took the scroll from the right hand of the One sitting on the throne. ⁸After he took the scroll, the four living things and the 24 elders bowed down before the Lamb. Each one of them had a harp. Also, they were holding golden bowls full of incense. These bowls of incense are the prayers of God's holy people.

⁹And they all sang a new song:

"You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
because you were killed;
and with your blood [death] you bought
men for God
from every tribe, language, people,
and nation.

¹⁰You made them to be a kingdom of priests
for our God.

And they will rule on the earth."

¹¹Then I looked, and I heard the voices of many angels. The angels were around the throne, the living things, and the elders. There were thousands and thousands of angels—there were 10,000 times 10,000. ¹²The angels said in a loud voice:

"The Lamb who was killed is worthy
to receive power, wealth, wisdom and strength,
honor, glory, and praise!"

¹³Then I heard every living thing in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea. I heard every thing in all these places, saying:

"All praise and honor and glory and power
forever and ever
to the One who sits on the throne
and to the Lamb!"

^{6a} Or *seven-fold Spirit*.

¹⁴The four living things said, "Amen!" And the elders bowed down and worshiped.

6 Then I watched while the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. I heard one of the four living things speak with a voice like thunder. It said, "Come!" ²I looked and there before me was a white horse. The rider on the horse held a bow, and he was given a crown. And he rode out, defeating the enemy. He rode out to win the victory.

³The Lamb opened the second seal. Then I heard the second living thing say, "Come!" ⁴Then another horse came out. This was a red horse. Its rider was given power to take away peace from the earth. He was given power to make people kill each other, and he was given a big sword.

⁵The Lamb opened the third seal. Then I heard the third living thing say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a black horse. Its rider held a pair of scales in his hand. ⁶Then I heard something that sounded like a voice. It came from where the four living things were. The voice said, "A quart of wheat for a day's pay. And three quarts of barley for a day's pay. And do not damage the olive oil and wine!"

⁷The Lamb opened the fourth seal. Then I heard the voice of the fourth living thing say, "Come!" ⁸I looked and there before me was a pale horse. Its rider was named death. Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth. They were given power to kill people by using the sword, by starving them, by disease, and with the wild animals of the earth.

⁹The Lamb opened the fifth seal. Then I saw some souls under the altar. They were the souls of those who had been killed because they were faithful to God's message and to the truth they had received. ¹⁰These souls shouted in a loud voice, "Holy and true Lord, how long until you judge the people of the earth and punish them for killing us?" ¹¹Then each one of these souls was given a white robe. They were told to wait a short time longer. There were still some of their brothers in the service of Christ who must be killed as they were. They were told to wait until all of this killing was finished.

¹²Then I watched while the Lamb opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun became as black as

rough black cloth. The full moon became red like blood. ¹³The stars in the sky fell to the earth like figs falling from a fig tree when the wind blows. ¹⁴The sky disappeared. It was rolled up like a scroll. And every mountain and island was moved from its place.

¹⁵Then all people hid in caves and behind the rocks on the mountains. There were the kings of the earth, the rulers, the generals, the rich people and the powerful people. Everyone, slave and free, hid himself. ¹⁶They called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us. Hide us from the face of the One who sits on the throne. Hide us from the anger of the Lamb! ¹⁷The great day for their anger has come. Who can stand against it?"

The 144,000 People of Israel

7 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth. The angels were holding the four winds of the earth. They were stopping the wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree. ²Then I saw another angel coming from the east. This angel had the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels. These were the four angels that God had given power to harm the earth and the sea. He said to the four angels, ³"Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees before we put the sign on the people who serve our God. We must put the sign on their foreheads." ⁴Then I heard how many people were marked with the sign. There were 144,000. They were from every family group of the people of Israel.

⁵From the family group of Judah 12,000 were marked with the sign,

from the family group of Reuben 12,000,

from the family group of Gad 12,000,

⁶from the family group of Asher 12,000,

from the family group of Naphtali 12,000,

from the family group of Manasseh 12,000,

⁷from the family group of Simeon 12,000,

from the family group of Levi 12,000,

from the family group of Issachar 12,000,

⁸from the family group of Zebulun 12,000,

from the family group of Joseph 12,000,
from the family group of Benjamin 12,000.

The Great Crowd

⁹Then I looked, and there was a great number of people. There were so many people that no one could count them. They were from every nation, tribe, people, and language. They were all standing before the throne and before the Lamb [Jesus]. They wore white robes and had palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰They were shouting in a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." ¹¹The elders and the four living things were there. All the angels were standing around them and the throne. The angels bowed down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God. ¹²They were saying, "Amen! Praise, glory, wisdom, thanks, honor, power, and strength belong to our God forever and ever. Amen!"

¹³Then one of the elders asked me, "Who are these people in white robes? Where did they come from?"

¹⁴I answered, "You know who they are, sir."

And the elder said, "These are the people who have come out of the great suffering. They have washed their robes with the blood of the Lamb. Now they are clean and white. ¹⁵And they are before the throne of God. They worship God day and night in his temple. And the One who sits on the throne will protect them. ¹⁶They will never be hungry again. They will never be thirsty again. The sun will not hurt them. No heat will burn them. ¹⁷For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd. He will lead them to springs of water that give life. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

The Seventh Seal

8 The Lamb opened the seventh seal. Then there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. ²And I saw the seven angels who stand before God. They were given seven trumpets.

³Another angel came and stood at the altar. This angel had a golden holder for incense. The angel was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all God's holy people. The angel put

this offering on the golden altar before the throne. ⁴The smoke from the incense went up from the angel's hand to God. It went up with the prayers of God's people. ⁵Then the angel filled the incense holder with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth. There were flashes of lightning, thunder and loud noises, and an earthquake.

The Seven Angels Blow Their Trumpets

⁶Then the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to blow them.

⁷The first angel blew his trumpet. Then hail and fire mixed with blood was poured down on the earth. And a third of the earth and all the green grass and a third of the trees were burned up.

⁸The second angel blew his trumpet. Then something that looked like a big mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea. And a third of the sea became blood. ⁹And a third of the living things in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

¹⁰The third angel blew his trumpet. Then a large star, burning like a torch, fell from the sky. It fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. ¹¹The name of the star is Wormwood. And a third of all the water became bitter. Many people died from drinking the water that was bitter.

¹²The fourth angel blew his trumpet. Then a third of the sun and a third of the moon and a third of the stars were struck. So a third of them became dark. A third of the day was without light.

¹³While I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying high in the air. The eagle said with a loud voice, "Trouble! Trouble! Trouble for those who live on the earth! The trouble will begin with the sounds of the trumpets that the other three angels are about to blow."

9 Then the fifth angel blew his trumpet. And I saw a star fall from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the deep hole that leads down to the bottomless pit. ²Then it opened the bottomless pit. Smoke came up from the hole like smoke from a big furnace. The sun and sky became dark be-

cause of the smoke from the hole. ³Then locusts came down to the earth out of the smoke. They were given the power of scorpions. ⁴They were told not to harm the grass on the earth or any plant or tree. They could harm only the people who did not have the sign of God on their foreheads. ⁵These locusts were given the power to cause pain to the people for five months. But they were not given the power to kill anyone. And the pain they felt was like the pain that a scorpion gives when it stings a person. ⁶During those days people will look for a way to die, but they will not find it. They will want to die, but death will run away from them.

⁷The locusts looked like horses prepared for battle. On their heads they wore things that looked like crowns of gold. Their faces looked like human faces. ⁸Their hair was like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth. ⁹Their chests looked like iron breastplates. The sound their wings made was like the noise of many horses and chariots hurrying into battle. ¹⁰The locusts had tails with stingers like scorpions. The power they had to hurt people for five months was in their tails. ¹¹The locusts had a king who was the angel of the bottomless pit. His name in the Jewish language is Abaddon. In the Greek language his name is Apollyon [Destroyer].

¹²The first great trouble is past. There are still two other great troubles that will come.

¹³The sixth angel blew his trumpet. Then I heard a voice coming from the horns on the golden altar that is before God. ¹⁴The voice said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Free the four angels who are tied at the great river Euphrates." ¹⁵These four angels had been kept ready for this hour and day and month and year. They were freed to kill a third of all people on the earth. ¹⁶I heard how many troops on horses were in their army. There were 200,000,000.

¹⁷In my vision I saw the horses and their riders. They looked like this: They had breastplates that were fiery red, dark blue, and yellow like sulfur. The heads of the horses looked like heads of lions. The horses had fire, smoke, and sulfur coming out of their mouths. ¹⁸A third of all the people on earth were killed by these three bad things coming out of the horses' mouths: the

fire, the smoke, and the sulfur. ¹⁹The horses' power was in their mouths and also in their tails. Their tails were like snakes that have heads to bite and hurt people.

²⁰The other people were not killed by these bad things. But they still did not change their hearts and turn away from what they had made with their own hands. They did not stop worshipping demons and idols made of gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood—things that cannot see or hear or walk. ²¹These people did not change their hearts and turn away from murder or evil magic, from their sexual sins or stealing.

The Angel and the Little Scroll

10 Then I saw another powerful angel coming down from heaven. He was dressed in a cloud and had a rainbow around his head. His face was like the sun, and his legs were like poles of fire. ²The angel was holding a small scroll open in his hand. The angel put his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land. ³He shouted loudly like the roaring of a lion. When he shouted, the voices of seven thunders spoke. ⁴The seven thunders spoke, and I started to write. But then I heard a voice from heaven. The voice said, "Do not write what the seven thunders said. Keep these things secret."

⁵Then the angel I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven. ⁶He made a promise by the One who lives forever and ever. He is the One who made the skies and all that is in them. He made the earth and all that is in it, and he made the sea and all that is in it. The angel said, "There will be no more waiting! ⁷In the days when the seventh angel is ready to blow his trumpet, God's secret plan will be finished as he told to his servants, the prophets."

⁸Then I heard the same voice from heaven again. The voice said to me, "Go and take the open scroll that is in the angel's hand. This is the angel that is standing on the sea and on the land."

⁹So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to me, "Take the scroll and eat it. It will be sour in your stomach. But in your mouth it will be sweet as honey."

¹⁰So I took the little scroll from the angel's hand and I ate it. In my mouth it tasted sweet as honey. But after I ate it, it was sour

in my stomach. ¹¹Then I was told, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, languages, and kings."

The Two Witnesses

11 Then I was given a measuring stick like a rod. I was told, "Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, and count the number of people worshipping there. ²But do not measure the yard outside the temple. Leave it alone. It has been given to the people who are not Jews. They will walk on the holy city for 42 months. ³And I will give power to my two witnesses to prophesy for 1,260 days. They will be dressed in sackcloth."

⁴These two witnesses are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. ⁵If anyone tries to hurt the witnesses, fire comes from their mouths and kills their enemies. Anyone who tries to hurt them will die like this. ⁶These witnesses have the power to stop the sky from raining during the time they are prophesying. They have power to make the waters become blood. They have power to send every kind of trouble to the earth. They can do this as many times as they want.

⁷When the two witnesses have finished telling their message, the beast will fight against them. This is the beast that comes up from the bottomless pit. He will defeat them and kill them. ⁸The bodies of the two witnesses will lie in the street of the great city named Sodom and Egypt. These names for the city have a special meaning. It is the city where the Lord was killed. ⁹Men from every race of people, tribe, language, and nation will look at the bodies of the two witnesses for three and a half days. They will refuse to bury them. ¹⁰People who live on the earth will be happy because these two are dead. They will have parties and send each other gifts. They will do these things because these two prophets brought much suffering to those who live on the earth.

¹¹But after three and a half days, God let life enter the two prophets again. They stood on their feet. Everyone who saw them was filled with fear. ¹²Then the two prophets heard a loud voice from heaven say, "Come up here!" And they went up into heaven in a cloud. Their enemies watched them go.

¹³At that same time there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city was destroyed. And 7,000 people were killed in the earthquake. Those who did not die were very afraid. They gave glory to the God of heaven.

¹⁴The second great trouble is finished. The third great trouble is coming soon.

The Seventh Trumpet

¹⁵Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet. And there were loud voices in heaven. The voices said:

“The kingdom of the world has now become
the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.^a
And he will rule forever and ever.”

¹⁶Then the 24 elders bowed down on their faces and worshiped God. These are the elders who sit on their thrones before God. ¹⁷They said:

“We give thanks to you, Lord God All-Powerful.
You are the One who is and who was.
We thank you because you have used
your great power
and have begun to rule!

¹⁸The people of the world were angry;
but now is the time for your anger.
Now is the time for the dead to be judged.
It is time to reward your servants the prophets,
and to reward your holy people,
all who respect you, great and small.
It is time to destroy those
who destroy the earth!”

¹⁹Then God’s temple in heaven was opened. The holy chest that holds the agreement could be seen in his temple. Then there were flashes of lightning, noises, thunder, an earthquake, and a great hailstorm.

The Woman and the Giant Dragon

12 And then a great wonder appeared in heaven: There was a woman who was clothed with the sun. The moon was under her feet. She had a crown of 12 stars on her head. ²The

^{15a} Or *Messiah*.

woman was pregnant. She cried out with pain because she was about to give birth. ³Then another wonder appeared in heaven: There was a giant red dragon. He had seven heads with seven crowns on each head. He also had ten horns. ⁴The dragon's tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and threw them down to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was ready to give birth to a baby. He wanted to eat the woman's baby as soon as it was born. ⁵The woman gave birth to a son. He will rule all the nations with an iron rod. But her child was taken up to God and to his throne. ⁶The woman ran away into the desert to a place God prepared for her. There she would be taken care of for 1,260 days.

⁷Then there was a war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon. The dragon and his angels fought back. ⁸But the dragon was not strong enough. He and his angels lost their place in heaven. ⁹He was thrown down out of heaven. (The giant dragon is that old snake called the devil or Satan. He leads the whole world into the wrong way.) The dragon with his angels were thrown down to the earth.

¹⁰Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "The salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ^a have now come. They have come because the accuser of our brothers has been thrown out. He accused our brothers day and night before our God. ¹¹And our brothers defeated him by the blood [death] of the Lamb and by the truth they preached. They did not love their lives so much that they were afraid of death. ¹²So be happy, you heavens and all who live there! But it will be bad for the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you! He is filled with anger. He knows that he does not have much time."

¹³The dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth. So he hunted down the woman who had given birth to the son. ¹⁴But the woman was given the two wings of a great eagle. Then she could fly to the place that was prepared for her in the desert. There she would be taken care of for three and one-half years. There she would be away from the snake. ¹⁵Then the snake poured water out of its mouth like a river. He poured the water toward the woman, so that the flood would carry her

^{10a} Or *Messiah*.

away. ¹⁶But the earth helped her. The earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that came from the mouth of the dragon. ¹⁷Then the dragon was very angry at the woman. He went off to make war against all her other children. Her children are those who obey God's commandments and have the truth that Jesus taught.

¹⁸And the dragon^a stood on the seashore.

The Two Beasts

13 Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads. There was a crown on each horn. A name against God was written on each head. ²This beast looked like a leopard, with feet like a bear's feet. He had a mouth like a lion's mouth. The dragon gave the beast all of his power and his throne and great authority. ³One of the heads of the beast looked as if it had been wounded and killed. But this death wound was healed. The whole world was amazed and followed the beast. ⁴People worshiped the dragon because he had given his power to the beast. And they also worshiped the beast. They asked, "Who is as powerful as the beast? Who can make war against him?"

⁵The beast was allowed to say proud words and words against God. He was allowed to use his power for 42 months. ⁶He used his mouth to speak against God. He spoke against God's name, against the place where God lives, and against all those who live in heaven. ⁷He was given power to make war against God's holy people and to defeat them. He was given power over every tribe, people, language, and nation. ⁸All who live on earth will worship the beast. These are all the people since the beginning of the world whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life. The Lamb is the One who was killed.

⁹If anyone has ears, he should listen:

¹⁰If anyone is to be a prisoner,

then he will be a prisoner.

If anyone kills with the sword,

then he will be killed with the sword.

^a18^a Some Greek copies say *And I stood on the seashore* and, therefore, connect it to verse 13:1.

This means that God's holy people must have endurance and faith.

¹¹Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but he talked like a dragon. ¹²This beast stands before the first beast and uses the same power that the first beast has. He uses this power to make everyone living on earth worship the first beast. The first beast was the one that had the death wound that was healed. ¹³The second one does great miracles. He even makes fire come down from heaven to earth while people are watching. ¹⁴This second beast fools those who live on earth. He fools them by the miracles he has been given the power to do. He does these miracles to serve the first beast. The second beast ordered people to make an idol to honor the first beast. This was the one that was wounded by the sword but did not die. ¹⁵The second beast was given power to give life to the idol of the first one. Then the idol could speak and order all who did not worship it to be killed. ¹⁶The second beast also forced all people, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to have a mark on their right hand or on their forehead. ¹⁷No one could buy or sell without this mark. This mark is the name of the beast or the number of his name. ¹⁸Whoever has understanding can find the meaning of the number. This requires wisdom. This number is the number of a man. His number is 666.

The Song of the Redeemed

14 Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb. He was standing on Mount Zion. There were 144,000 people with him. They all had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. ²And I heard a sound from heaven like the noise of flooding water and like the sound of loud thunder. The sound I heard was like people playing harps. ³And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living things and the elders. The only ones who could learn the new song were the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. No one else could learn the song. ⁴These 144,000 are the ones who did not do sinful things with women. They kept themselves pure. They follow the Lamb every place he goes. These 144,000

were redeemed from among the people of the earth. They are the first people to be offered to God and the Lamb. ⁵They were not guilty of telling lies. They are without fault.

The Three Angels

⁶Then I saw another angel flying high in the air. The angel had an eternal Good News to preach to those who live on earth—to every nation, tribe, language, and people. ⁷The angel said in a loud voice, “Fear God and give him praise. The time has come for God to judge all people. Worship God. He made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the springs of water.”

⁸Then the second angel followed the first angel and said, “She is destroyed! The great city of Babylon is destroyed! She made all the nations drink the wine of her adultery and of God’s anger.”

⁹A third angel followed the first two angels. This third angel said in a loud voice: “It will be bad for the person who worships the beast and his idol and gets the beast’s mark on the forehead or on the hand. ¹⁰He will drink the wine of God’s anger. This wine is prepared with all its strength in the cup of God’s anger. He will be put in pain with burning sulfur before the holy angels and the Lamb. ¹¹And the smoke from their burning pain will rise forever and ever. There will be no rest, day or night, for those who worship the beast and his idol or who get the mark of his name.” ¹²This means that God’s holy people must never give up. They must obey God’s commandments and keep their faith in Jesus.

¹³Then I heard a voice from heaven. It said, “Write this: From now on, the dead who were in the Lord when they died are blessed.”

The Spirit says, “Yes, that is true. They will rest from their hard work. The reward of all they have done stays with them.”

The Earth Is Harvested

¹⁴I looked and there before me was a white cloud. Sitting on the white cloud was One who looked “like a son of man.”^a He had a gold crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand. ¹⁵Then another angel came out of the temple. This angel called to the One who was sitting on the cloud, “Take your sickle and

^{14a} Daniel 7:13.

gather from the earth. The time to harvest has come. The fruit of the earth is ripe." ¹⁶So the One who was sitting on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested.

¹⁷Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven. This angel also had a sharp sickle. ¹⁸And then another angel came from the altar. This angel has power over the fire. This angel called to the angel with the sharp sickle, saying, "Take your sharp sickle and gather the bunches of grapes from the earth's vine. The earth's grapes are ripe." ¹⁹The angel swung his sickle over the earth. He gathered the earth's grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God's anger. ²⁰The grapes were trampled in the winepress outside the city, and blood flowed out of the winepress. It rose as high as the heads of the horses for a distance of 200 miles.

The Angels with the Last Plagues

15 Then I saw another wonder in heaven. It was great and amazing. There were seven angels bringing seven troubles. These are the last troubles, because after these troubles God's anger is finished.

²I saw what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire. All of those who had won the victory over the beast and his idol and over the number of his name were standing by the sea. They had harps that God had given them. ³They sang the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb:

"Great and wonderful are your deeds,

Lord God All-Powerful.

Right and true are your ways,

King of the nations.

⁴All people will fear you, O Lord.

All will praise your name.

Only you are holy.

All people will come and worship you,

because it is clear that you do the things
that are right."

⁵After this I saw the temple (the tabernacle of witness) in heaven, and the temple was opened. ⁶And the seven angels bringing the seven troubles came out of the temple. They were dressed in clean, shining linen and wore golden bands tied

around their chests. ⁷Then one of the four living things gave seven golden bowls to the seven angels. The bowls were filled with the anger of God, who lives forever and ever. ⁸The temple was filled with smoke from the glory and the power of God. No one could enter the temple until the seven troubles of the seven angels were finished.

The Bowls of God's Wrath

16 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple. The voice said to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the seven bowls of God's anger on the earth."

²The first angel left. He poured out his bowl on the land. Then ugly and painful sores came upon all those who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his idol.

³The second angel poured out his bowl on the sea. Then the sea became blood like that of a dead man. Every living thing in the sea died.

⁴The third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and the springs of water. And they became blood. ⁵Then I heard the angel of the waters say:

"You are the One who is and who was.

You are the Holy One.

You are right in the judgments you have made.

⁶Men have spilled the blood of
your holy people and your prophets.

Now you have given them blood to drink.

This is what they deserve."

⁷And I heard the altar say:

"Yes, Lord God All-Powerful,
your judgments are true and right."

⁸The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun. The sun was given power to burn the people with fire. ⁹They were burned by the great heat and they cursed the name of God. God is the One who had control over these troubles. But the people refused to change their hearts and lives and give glory to God.

¹⁰The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and darkness covered the beast's kingdom. People bit their tongues because of the pain. ¹¹They cursed the God of

heaven because of their pain and the sores they had. But they refused to change their hearts and turn away from the evil things they did.

¹²The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates. The water in the river was dried up. This prepared the way for the kings from the east to come. ¹³Then I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs. They came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. ¹⁴These evil spirits are the spirits of demons doing miracles. They go out to the kings of the whole world. They go out to gather the kings for battle on the great day of God the All-Powerful.

¹⁵"Listen! I will come as a thief comes! Blessed is the person who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him. Then he will not have to go unclothed and be ashamed because he is naked."

¹⁶Then the evil spirits gathered the kings together to the place that is called Armageddon^a in the Jewish language.

¹⁷The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air. Then a loud voice came out of the temple from the throne, saying, "It is finished!" ¹⁸Then there were flashes of lightning, noises, thunder, and a big earthquake. This was the worst earthquake that has ever happened since people have been on earth. ¹⁹The great city split into three parts, and the cities of the nations were destroyed. And God did not forget to punish Babylon the Great. He gave that city the cup filled with the wine of his terrible anger. ²⁰Every island disappeared and there were no more mountains. ²¹Giant hailstones fell on people from the sky. The hailstones weighed about 100 pounds each. People cursed God because of the hail. This trouble was a terrible thing.

The Woman on the Beast

17 One of the seven angels came and spoke to me. This was one of the angels that had the seven bowls. He said, "Come, and I will show you the punishment that will be given to the famous prostitute. She is the one sitting over many waters. ²The kings of the earth sinned sexually with her. And the people of the earth became drunk from the wine of her sexual sin."

^{16a} Or *Hill of Megiddo*.

³Then the angel carried me away by the Spirit to the desert. There I saw a woman sitting on a red beast. He was covered with names against God written on him. He had seven heads and ten horns. ⁴The woman was dressed in purple and red. She was shining with the gold, jewels, and pearls she was wearing. She had a golden cup in her hand. This cup was filled with evil things and the uncleanness of her sexual sin. ⁵She had a title written on her forehead. This title has a hidden meaning. This is what was written:

THE GREAT BABYLON
MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES

AND THE EVIL THINGS OF THE EARTH

⁶I saw that the woman was drunk. She was drunk with the blood of God's holy people and of those who were killed because of their faith in Jesus.

When I saw the woman, I was fully amazed. ⁷Then the angel said to me, "Why are you amazed? I will tell you the hidden meaning of this woman and the beast she rides—the one with seven heads and ten horns. ⁸The beast that you saw was once alive. He is not alive now. But he will be alive and come up out of the bottomless pit and go away to be destroyed. The people who live on earth will be amazed when they see the beast. They will be amazed because he was once alive, is not alive now, but will come again. These are the people whose names have never been written in the book of life since the beginning of the world.

⁹You need a wise mind to understand this. The seven heads on the beast are the seven hills where the woman sits. They are also seven kings. ¹⁰Five of the kings have already died. One of the kings lives now. And the last king is coming. When he comes, he will stay only a short time. ¹¹The beast that was once alive but is not alive now is an eighth king. This eighth king also belongs to the first seven kings. And he will go away to be destroyed.

¹²The ten horns you saw are ten kings. These ten kings have not yet begun to rule. But they will receive power to rule with the beast for one hour. ¹³All ten of these kings have the same purpose. And they will give their power and authority to the beast. ¹⁴They will make war against the Lamb. But the Lamb

will defeat them, because he is Lord of lords and King of kings. He will defeat them with his chosen and faithful followers—the people that he has called.”

¹⁵Then the angel said to me, “You saw the waters where the prostitute sits. These waters are the many peoples, the different races, nations, and languages. ¹⁶The beast and the ten horns [ten kings] you saw will hate the prostitute. They will take everything she has and leave her naked. They will eat her body and burn her with fire.

¹⁷God made the ten horns want to carry out his purpose: They agreed to give the beast their power to rule. They will rule until what God has said is completed. ¹⁸The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth.”

Babylon Is Destroyed

18 Then I saw another angel coming down from heaven. This angel had great power. The angel’s glory made the earth bright. ²The angel shouted in a powerful voice:

“She is destroyed!

The great city of Babylon is destroyed!

She has become a home for demons.

A city for every

evil spirit,

A city for every

unclean and hated bird;

³All the peoples of the earth have drunk

the strong wine of her sexual sin.

The kings of the earth have sinned sexually with her,

and the businessmen of the world have grown rich

from the great wealth of her luxury.”

⁴Then I heard another voice from heaven say:

“Come out of that city, my people,

so that you will not share in her sins.

Then you will not share any of the bad things that will happen to her.

⁵The city’s sins are piled up as high as heaven.

God has not forgotten the wrongs
she has done.

⁶Give that city the same as she gave to others.

Pay her back twice as much as she did.

Prepare wine for her that is twice as strong
as the wine she prepared for others.

⁷She gave herself much glory
and rich living.

Give her that much suffering and sadness.

She says to herself, 'I am a queen
sitting on my throne.

I am not a widow; I will never be sad.'

⁸So these bad things will come to her
in one day:

death, crying, and great hunger.

She will be destroyed by fire,
because the Lord God who judges her is
powerful."

⁹The kings of the earth who sinned sexually with her [Babylon] and shared her wealth will see the smoke from her burning. Then they will cry and weep because of her. ¹⁰They will be afraid of her suffering and stand far away. They will say:

"Terrible! How terrible, O great city,

O powerful city of Babylon!

Your punishment has come in one hour!"

¹¹And the businessmen of the earth will cry and weep for her. They will be sad because now there is no one to buy the things they sell. ¹²They sell gold, silver, jewels, pearls, fine linen cloth, purple cloth, silk, and scarlet cloth. They sell all kinds of citron wood, and all kinds of things made from ivory, expensive wood, bronze, iron, and marble. ¹³They also sell cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, olive oil, fine flour, wheat, cattle, sheep, horses, and carriages. They sell the bodies and souls of men.

¹⁴"The good things you wanted
are gone from you.

All your rich and fancy things have disappeared.

You will never have them again."

¹⁵The businessmen will be afraid of her suffering and stand far

away from her. These are the men who became rich from selling those things to her. The men will cry and be sad. ¹⁶They will say:

“Terrible! How terrible for the great city!

She was dressed in fine linen, purple
and scarlet cloth.

She was shining with gold, jewels, and pearls!

¹⁷All these riches have been destroyed in one hour!”

Every sea captain, all those who travel on ships, the sailors, and all who earn their living from the sea stood far away from Babylon. ¹⁸They saw the smoke from her burning. They shouted, “There was never a city like this great city!” ¹⁹They threw dust on their heads, cried and were sad. They said:

“Terrible! How terrible for the great city!

All the people who had ships on the sea
became rich because of her wealth!

But she has been destroyed in one hour!

²⁰Be happy because of this, O heaven!

Be happy, God’s holy people and apostles and
prophets!

God has punished her because of what she did to
you.”

²¹Then a powerful angel picked up a stone like a large millstone. The angel threw the stone into the sea and said:

“That is how the great city of Babylon will be thrown
down.

The city will never be found again.

²²The music of people playing harps and other
instruments,

flutes and trumpets, will never be heard in you
again.

No workman doing any job will ever be found in
you again.

The sound of a millstone will never be heard in you
again.

²³The light of a lamp will never shine in you again.

The voices of a bridegroom and bride
will never be heard in you again.

Your businessmen were the world’s great men.

All the nations were tricked by your magic.
²⁴She [Babylon] is guilty of the blood [death]
of the prophets and God's holy people,
and of all who have been killed on earth."

People in Heaven Praise God

19 After this I heard what sounded like a great many people
in heaven. They were saying:

"Hallelujah [Praise God]!
Salvation, glory, and power belong to our God.

² His judgments are true and right.

Our God has punished the prostitute.

She is the one who made the earth evil
with her sexual sin.

God has punished the prostitute to pay her
for the blood [death] of his servants."

³Again they said:

"Hallelujah!

Her smoke will rise forever and ever."

⁴Then the 24 elders and the four living things bowed down.
They worshiped God, who sits on the throne. They said:

"Amen, Hallelujah!"

⁵Then a voice came from the throne:

"Praise our God, all you who serve him!

Praise our God, all you who honor him, both small
and great!"

⁶Then I heard what sounded like a great many people. It
sounded like the noise of flooding water and like loud thunder.
The people were saying:

"Hallelujah!

Our Lord God rules. He is the All-Powerful.

⁷Let us rejoice and be happy

and give God glory!

Give God glory, because the wedding
of the Lamb [Jesus] has come.

And the Lamb's bride [the church]
has made herself ready.

⁸Fine linen was given to the bride for her to wear.

The linen was bright and clean."

(The fine linen means the good deeds done by God's holy people.)

⁹Then the angel said to me, "Write this: Those who are invited to the wedding meal of the Lamb are blessed!" Then the angel said, "These are the true words of God."

¹⁰Then I bowed down at the angel's feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not worship me! I am a servant like you and your brothers who have the truth of Jesus. Worship God! Because the truth about Jesus is the spirit that gives all prophecy."

The Rider on the White Horse

¹¹Then I saw heaven open, and there before me was a white horse. The rider on the horse is called Faithful and True. He is right when he judges and makes war. ¹²His eyes are like burning fire and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him, but he is the only one who knows the name. No other person knows the name. ¹³He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood. His name is the Word of God. ¹⁴The armies of heaven were following him on white horses. They were dressed in fine linen, white and clean. ¹⁵A sharp sword comes out of the rider's mouth. He will use this sword to defeat the nations. He will rule them with a rod of iron. He will trample out the wine in the winepress of the terrible anger of God the All-Powerful. ¹⁶On his robe and on his leg was written this name:

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

¹⁷Then I saw an angel standing in the sun. The angel called with a loud voice to all the birds flying in the sky, "Come together for the great feast of God. ¹⁸Come together so that you can eat the bodies of kings and generals and famous men. Come to eat the bodies of the horses and their riders and the bodies of all people, free, slave, small, and great."

¹⁹Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth. Their armies were gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. ²⁰But the beast was captured and with him the false prophet. This false prophet was the one who did the miracles for the beast. The false prophet had used these miracles to trick those who had the mark of the beast and worshiped his idol. The false prophet and the beast were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. ²¹The rest were

killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse. All the birds ate the bodies until they were full.

The 1000 Years

20 I saw an angel coming down from heaven who had the key to the bottomless pit. He also held a large chain in his hand. ²The angel seized the dragon, that old snake who is the devil (or Satan). The angel tied him up for 1,000 years. ³Then he threw him into the bottomless pit and closed it and locked it over him. The angel did this so that he could not trick the people of the earth any more until the 1,000 years were ended. After 1,000 years he must be set free for a short time.

⁴Then I saw some thrones and people sitting on them. They had been given the power to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been killed because they told the truth about Jesus and the message from God. They had not worshiped the beast or his idol. They had not received the mark of the beast on their foreheads or on their hands. They came back to life and ruled with Christ for 1,000 years. ⁵(The others that were dead did not live again until the 1,000 years were ended.) This is the first raising of the dead. ⁶Blessed and holy are those who share in this first raising of the dead. The second death has no power over them. They will be priests for God and for Christ. They will rule with him for 1,000 years.

⁷When the 1,000 years are over, Satan will be set free from his prison. ⁸He will go out to trick the nations in all the earth—Gog and Magog. Satan will gather them for battle. There will be so many people that they will be like sand on the seashore. ⁹And Satan's army marched across the earth and gathered around the camp of God's people and the city that God loves. But fire came down from heaven and destroyed them. ¹⁰And Satan (the one who tricked them) was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur with the beast and the false prophet. There they will be punished day and night forever and ever.

People of the World Are Judged

¹¹Then I saw a great white throne and the One who was sitting on it. Earth and sky ran away from him and disappeared.

¹²And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the

throne. And the book of life was opened. There were also other books opened. The dead were judged by what they had done, which was written in the books. ¹³The sea gave up the dead who were in it. Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them. Each person was judged by what he had done. ¹⁴And Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This lake of fire is the second death. ¹⁵And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

The New Jerusalem

21 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth had disappeared. Now there was no sea. ²And I saw the holy city coming down out of heaven from God. This holy city is the new Jerusalem. It was prepared like a bride dressed for her husband. ³I heard a loud voice from the throne. The voice said, "Now God's home is with men. He will live with them and they will be his people. God himself will be with them and will be their God. ⁴He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death, sadness, crying, or pain. All the old ways are gone."

⁵The One who was sitting on the throne said, "Look! I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this, because these words are true and can be trusted."

⁶The One on the throne said to me: "It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give free water from the spring of the water of life to anyone who is thirsty. ⁷Anyone who wins the victory will receive this. And I will be his God, and he will be my son. ⁸But those who are cowards, who refuse to believe, who do evil things, who kill, who sin sexually, who do evil magic, who worship idols, and who tell lies—all these will have a place in the lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."

⁹One of the seven angels came to me. This was one of the angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last troubles. He said, "Come with me. I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." ¹⁰The angel carried me away by the Spirit to a very large and high mountain. He showed me the holy city, Jerusalem. It was coming down out of heaven from God. ¹¹It was shining with the glory of God. It was shining bright like a very ex-

pensive jewel, like a jasper. It was clear as crystal. ¹²The city had a great high wall with 12 gates. There were 12 angels at the gates. On each gate was written the name of one of the 12 family groups of Israel. ¹³There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south, and three on the west. ¹⁴The walls of the city were built on 12 foundation stones. On the stones were written the names of the 12 apostles of the Lamb.

¹⁵The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod made of gold. He had this rod to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. ¹⁶The city was built in a square. Its length was equal to its width. The angel measured the city with the rod. The city was 12,000 stadia^a long, 12,000 stadia wide, and 12,000 stadia high. ¹⁷The angel also measured the wall. It was 144 cubits^b high,^c by man's measurement. That was the measurement the angel was using. ¹⁸The wall was made of jasper. The city was made of pure gold, as pure as glass. ¹⁹The foundation stones of the city walls had every kind of jewel in them. The first cornerstone was jasper, the second was sapphire, the third was chalcedony, the fourth was emerald, ²⁰the fifth was onyx, the sixth was carnelian, the seventh was yellow quartz, the eighth was beryl, the ninth was topaz, the tenth was chrysoprase, the eleventh was jacinth, and the twelfth was amethyst. ²¹The 12 gates were 12 pearls. Each gate was made from a single pearl. The street of the city was made of pure gold. The gold was clear as glass.

²²I did not see a temple in the city. The Lord God All-Powerful and the Lamb [Jesus] are the city's temple. ²³The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it. The glory of God is its light and the Lamb is the city's lamp. ²⁴By its light the nations will walk. The kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. ²⁵The city's gates will never be shut on any day, because there is no night there. ²⁶The greatness and the honor of the nations will be brought into it. ²⁷Nothing unclean will ever enter the city. No one who does shameful things or tells lies will ever go into it. Only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life will enter the city.

22 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life. The river was shining like crystal. It flows from the throne

^{16a} One stadion was a distance of about 200 yards. It was one-eighth of a Roman mile. ^{17b} A cubit is about half a yard, the length from the elbow to the tip of the little finger. ^{17c} Or *thick*.

of God and of the Lamb ²down the middle of the street of the city. The tree of life was on each side of the river. It produces fruit 12 times a year, once each month. The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ³Nothing that God judges guilty will be in that city. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be there. And God's servants will worship him. ⁴They will see his face and his name will be written on their foreheads. ⁵There will never be night again. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun. The Lord God will give them light. And they will rule like kings forever and ever.

⁶The angel said to me, "These words are true and can be trusted. The Lord is the God of the spirits of the prophets. He sent his angel to show his servants the things that must happen soon."

⁷"Listen! I am coming soon! He who obeys the words of prophecy in this book will be blessed."

⁸I am John. I am the one who heard and saw these things. When I heard and saw them, I bowed down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed these things to me. ⁹But the angel said to me, "Do not worship me! I am a servant like you and your brothers the prophets. I am a servant like all those who obey the words in this book. Worship God!"

¹⁰Then the angel told me, "Do not keep secret the words of prophecy in this book because the time is near. ¹¹Whoever is doing evil, let him continue to do evil. Whoever is unclean, let him continue to be unclean. Whoever is doing right, let him continue to do right. Whoever is holy, let him continue to be holy."

¹²"Listen! I am coming soon! I will bring rewards with me. I will repay each one for what he has done. ¹³I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

¹⁴"Those who wash their robes will be blessed. They will have the right to the tree of life. They may go through the gates into the city. ¹⁵Outside the city are the dogs [impure people], those who do evil magic, who sin sexually, who murder, who worship idols, and who love lies and tell lies.

¹⁶"I, Jesus, have sent my angel to tell you these things for the churches. I am the descendent from the family of David. I am the bright morning star."

¹⁷The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" Everyone who hears this should also say, "Come!" If anyone is thirsty, let him come; whoever wishes it may have the water of life as a free gift.

¹⁸I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to these words, God will give him the troubles written about in this book. ¹⁹And if anyone takes away from the words of this book of prophecy, God will take away his share of the tree of life and of the holy city, which are written about in this book.

²⁰Jesus is the One who says that these things are true. Now he says, "Yes, I am coming soon."

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

²¹The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all.

Topical Index

New Century Version

Topical Index

The topical index is a guide to the major topics found in the New Testament. Following each topical entry are selected passages where that subject is mentioned. The index does not include every topic in the New Testament nor every passage where a topic is discussed.

Often an entry will be followed in parentheses by varying forms or synonyms of the entry that are used in the passages listed. Where a simpler word or phrase has been used in the *New Century Version* in place of a more traditional word, the traditional word is given in parentheses. For example, the word "follower" is followed in parentheses by the more traditional word "disciple." Also, cross references are given for additional information on a topic.

The scripture references listed are only the first mention of a subject in a passage. Since the discussion of a subject may continue for several verses, a thorough reading of the passage will be helpful.

The following abbreviations are used for the books of the New Testament.

Matt.	Matthew	1 Tim.	1 Timothy
Mark	Mark	2 Tim.	2 Timothy
Luke	Luke	Titus	Titus
John	John	Philem.	Philemon
Acts	Acts	Heb.	Hebrews
Rom.	Romans	James	James
1 Cor.	1 Corinthians	1 Pet.	1 Peter
2 Cor.	2 Corinthians	2 Pet.	2 Peter
Gal.	Galatians	1 John	1 John
Eph.	Ephesians	2 John	2 John
Phil.	Philippians	3 John	3 John
Col.	Colossians	Jude	Jude
1 Thess.	1 Thessalonians	Rev.	Revelation
2 Thess.	2 Thessalonians		

Abba

an address to God, Mark 14:36;
Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6

Abraham

father of the Jews, Matt. 3:9; Luke
1:55; 16:24; John 8:39; Acts 7:2
an example of faith, Rom. 4:1;
Gal. 3:6; Heb. 11:8; James 2:22

Adam

compared to Christ, Rom. 5:14;
1 Cor. 15:22

adultery

kinds of, Matt. 5:27; 19:9
punishment for, 1 Cor. 6:9; Heb.
13:4
examples of, Mark 6:17; John 8:3

Agabus

predicts future, Acts 11:27; 21:10

agreement (covenant, testament)

Christ's blood of, Matt. 26:28;
Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25; Heb.
13:20
new compared to old, 2 Cor. 3:6;
Gal. 3:15; Heb. 7:22; 8-10

Agrippa see *Herod Agrippa II***altar**

Jewish, Matt. 5:23; 23:18; 1 Cor.
9:13; Heb. 7:13; 9:4
pagan, Acts 17:23; 1 Cor. 10:18
visions of, Rev. 6:9; 8:3; 9:13;
11:1; 14:18

Ananias

husband of Sapphira, Acts 5:1
preacher in Damascus, Acts 9:10;
22:12
high priest, Acts 23:2

Andrew

called by Jesus, Matt. 4:18; 10:2;
Mark 1:16
calls Simon Peter, John 1:41
at feeding of 5000, John 6:8

angel (archangel)

appearances of, Matt. 1:20; 4:11;
28:2; Luke 1:11, 26; 2:9; 22:43;
Acts 5:19; 8:26; 10:3; 12:7

characteristics, duties of, Matt. 13:
39; 16:27; 18:10; 24:31; 25:31;
26:53; 1 Thess. 4:16; Heb. 1:4;
1 Pet. 1:12; 3:22; Jude 9; Rev.
5:2; 7; 12:7; 14:6; 17
rebellious, 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6
names of, Luke 1:19; Jude 9; Rev.
9:11; 12:7

anger

of God toward man, Matt. 3:7;
John 3:36; Rom. 1:18; 2:5; 9:22;
Col. 3:6
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5:9; 1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9
warnings against, Matt. 5:22;
2 Cor. 12:20; Eph. 4:26, 31; Col.
3:8; 1 Tim. 2:8; James 1:19

Antichrist see *Enemy of Christ***apostle**

called, Mark 3:14; Acts 1-2;
Rom. 1:1
duties and powers of, Luke 9; 11:
49; Acts 2:43; 4:2; 5:12; 8:18;
2 Cor. 12:12
as leader of the church, Acts 2:42;
9:27; 15; 16:4; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph.
2:20; 4:11
false, 2 Cor. 11:13; Rev. 2:2

argument (argue, arguing)

examples of, Mark 9:14; Luke
9:46; John 6:52; Acts 6:9; 23:9
avoiding, Phil. 2:14; 1 Tim. 6:4;
2 Tim. 2:23; Titus 3:9

ark

of Noah, Matt. 24:38; Heb. 11:7;
1 Pet. 3:20
of the covenant (chest of the
agreement), Heb. 9:4; Rev.
11:19

asleep see *sleep***authority** (power)

of men, Matt. 8:9; 20:25; Luke
20:20; 22:25; Acts 9:14; 26:10;
Rom. 7:1; 13:1; 1 Tim. 2:2;
1 Pet. 2:13
divine, Matt. 7:29; 9:6; Mark 11:
28; 2 Pet. 2:10

entrusted to man, 2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10; 1 Thess. 4:2; Titus 2:15;
Heb. 13:17

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examples of, Acts 8:12, 38; 9:18;
10:48; 16:15, 33; 19:5; 1 Cor.
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1:4; Luke 3; John 1:25; Acts 19:3
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2:38; Rom. 6:3; 1 Cor. 12:13;
Gal. 3:27; Eph. 4:5; Col. 2:12
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of Holy Spirit, Mark 1:8; Acts 1:5;
11:16

Barnabas

an encourager, Acts 4:36; 9:27;
11:23
Paul's partner, Acts 11:26; 13–15;
Gal. 2

Beelzebul

a name for Satan, Matt. 12:24;
Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15

believers

a name for Christians, Acts 2:44;
4:32; 5:14; 1 Cor. 6:6; Gal. 6:10;
1 Tim. 4:12

birth

physical, Matt. 1; Luke 1–2; Eph.
2:11; Rev. 12:2
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1:18; 1 Pet. 1:3, 23; 1 John 3:9;
4:7; 5:18

blasphemy (speaking against God)

examples of, Rom. 2:24; 1 Tim.
1:13; 2 Pet. 2:12; Rev. 13:6
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John 10:36

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from God, Matt. 5:3; John 1:16;
Acts 3:25; Rom. 10:12; 15:27;
Heb. 6:7; 1 Pet. 3:14; 4:14
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each other, Luke 6:28; Rom. 12:
14; 1 Cor. 4:12; 1 Pet. 3:9

blindness

physical, Matt. 9:27; 11:5; 15:30;
Mark 8:22; 10:46; Luke 4:18;
John 9; Acts 9:8; 13:11
spiritual, Matt. 23:16; John 9:39;
Rom. 2:19; 2 Pet. 1:9; Rev. 3:17

blood

of animals, Heb. 9:12; 10:4
of Christ, Matt. 26:28; Acts 20:28;
Rom. 5:9; Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:
19; 1 John 1:7

body

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10:28; Col. 2:23
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1 Cor. 6:13; 7:4, 34; 9:27; 2 Cor.
4:10; 5:10; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:20;
1 Thess. 4:5; 5:23
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24; Col. 1:22; 1 Tim. 3:16; Heb.
10:10; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18
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12:5; 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 1:23;
4:4; 5:23; Col. 1:18

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John 20:30; Acts 1:1; 8:28; Rev.
22:7
of life, Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5; 13:8;
17:8; 20:12; 21:27

born again *see birth, spiritual*

bread

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John 6:31; 21:9; Acts 2:46
as a symbol, John 6:32; 1 Cor. 5:8
in Lord's Supper, Luke 22:19; Acts
20:7; 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:23

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12:20; Acts 7:13
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John 2:12; 7:3; Acts 1:14; 1 Cor.
9:5
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Rom. 8:29; 12:10; 1 Thess. 5:27;
1 Tim. 6:2; Heb. 2:11; 1 Pet. 2:17

Caesar

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 Tiberius, Luke 3:1; 20:22; John 19:12
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 Nero, Acts 25:8; 27:24; Phil. 4:22

Caiaphas

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 at Jesus' trial, Matt. 26:57; John 18:13

calling

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 responsibilities due to God's, Col. 3:15; 1 Pet. 1:15; 2:21; 3:9; 2 Pet. 1:10
 privileges due to God's, Rom. 8:30; Gal. 5:13; Eph. 4:4; Col. 3:15; 1 Pet. 5:10
 God's means of, Gal. 1:15; 2 Thess. 2:14; 2 Pet. 1:3

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(repentance)
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 examples of failure to, Matt. 11:20; Luke 16:31; 2 Cor. 12:21; Rev. 9:20
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responsibilities of, Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20; 1 Tim. 3:4; 5:4
 training of, Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21; 1 Tim. 3:12; Titus 1:6
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chosen ones (elect)

name for believers, Rom. 8:33; Eph. 1:4; 2 Tim. 2:10; 1 Pet. 1:2

· **Christ** see also *Jesus, blood, resurrection, cross*

in creation, John 1:1; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2, 10
 equal with God, John 5:23; 10:30; 14:11; Phil. 2:6; Col. 2:9; Heb. 1:3
 as judge, Matt. 7:23; 10:32; 25:31; John 5:22; Acts 17:31
 as Savior, Matt. 1:21; John 12:47; Acts 2:21; Rom. 5:10; Eph. 5:23; Titus 3:6
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 union with, John 15:5; Rom. 8:10; 12:5; 1 Cor. 1:2; 4:17; 2 Cor. 1:21; 5:17; Eph. 2:7; 3:17; 4:32; Heb. 3:14
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Christian

a name for Christ's followers, Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16

church (believers, followers, God's firstborn children)

foundation of, Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:47
 importance of, Acts 20:28; Eph. 1:22; 3:10, 21; 5:23; Col. 1:18; 1 Tim. 3:15; Heb. 12:23
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clean

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2:11; 1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 2:19

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wrong, Rom. 2:15; 1 Tim. 1:5,
19; 3:9; 2 Tim. 1:3; 1 Pet. 3:16
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1 Cor. 8; 10:28
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corrupt, 1 Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:15
untaught, Acts 26:9; Rom. 10:2

conversion (change in beliefs)

need for, Matt. 4:17; Acts 3:19;
17:30; 26:18; James 4:8; 5:20
examples of, Acts 8:26–39; 9:
1–19; 10; 11:21; 16:11–34; 22:
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Cornelius

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Mark 14:55
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Phil. 1:20; 2 Tim. 1:7

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Crete

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cross

Jesus' death on, Matt. 27:31; Mark
15:24; Luke 23:33; John 19:18;
Acts 2:36; 4:10

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Col. 1:20; 2:14

importance of, 1 Cor. 2:2; Gal.
6:14

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10:38; Luke 9:23; Rom. 6:6; Gal.
2:19; 5:24

crown

a king's, Rev. 12:3; 13:1; 19:12
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15:17; John 19:2
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1 Pet. 5:4; Rev. 2:10

curse

from God, John 7:49; Gal. 3:10
forbidden for man, Matt. 15:4;
Rom. 12:14; 1 Cor. 4:12; James
3:10

darkness

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20:1; Acts 2:20; 13:11
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Rom. 13:12; Eph. 5:8; Col. 1:13;
1 Thess. 5:4; 1 Pet. 2:9; 1 John
1:5; 2:8
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2 Pet. 2:17; Jude 6, 13

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Acts 2:34; 13:22
Jesus as a son of, Matt. 12:23;
Mark 10:47; 12:35; 2 Tim. 2:8
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1:16; 2:25; Rom. 4:6; 11:9

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a servant of the church, Phil. 1:1;
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a result of sin, Rom. 5:12; 6:23;
1 Cor. 15:21
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54; 1 Thess. 4:16; 2 Tim. 1:10;
Heb. 2:14; Rev. 1:18
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14:8; Phil. 1:21; Heb. 11:13; Rev.
14:13
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5:16; Rev. 21:8

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8:28; 9:32; Mark 7:25; 9:17

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possession, Mark 3:22; John
7:20; 8:48; 10:20

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3:11; 5:7; Luke 8:28; Acts 19:15;
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2:4; Jude 6

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disciple see *follower*

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13; 15:30; 21:14; Mark 10:52;

Luke 7:21; 13:12; John 4:50; 5:9;
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9:34; 14:10; 19:12; 28:8

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Phil. 2:27; 1 Tim. 5:23; 2 Tim.
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1 Cor. 7:12

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27:19

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1 Cor. 6:10; Eph. 5:18; 1 Tim.

3:3; 1 Pet. 4:3

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Egypt

Jesus in, Matt. 2:13

Israelites in, Acts 7:9; 13:17; Heb.
3:16; 8:9; 11:22; Jude 5

elders (older leaders)

in Jewish religion, Matt. 21:23;
Mark 11:27; Luke 22:52; Acts
4:5

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15:2; 16:4

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1 Pet. 5:1

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6:27; Rom. 12:20; 2 Thess. 3:15

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1 Cor. 15:25; Phil. 3:18; Heb.
10:27; James 4:4

Enemy of Christ

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4:3; 2 John 7

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3:15; 12:25; 17:3; Gal. 6:8

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7:42; Acts 7:13; Col. 3:18; 1 Tim.
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Heb. 2:11; 1 Pet. 4:17

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Luke 2:37; Acts 13:2
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14:23
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23:46; John 5:17; 6:32; 8:16;
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8:15; 1 Cor. 8:6; 2 Cor. 6:18; Gal.
4:6; Eph. 1:17; 2:18; 4:6; James
1:17; 1 Pet. 1:17; 1 John 1:3; 2:1
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10:29; Luke 15:12; Eph. 5:31;
6:2; Col. 3:21; 1 Thess. 2:11;
Heb. 12:7

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Luke 23:40; Acts 9:31; 1 Pet.
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17:6; 25:25; Mark 4:38; 5:33;
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12:3; 20:6

Felix

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23:24; 24; 25:14

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2:42; 1 Cor. 10:16; 1 John 1:7
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1:9; 1 John 1:3; Rev. 3:20
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Phil. 2:1
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5:2; Eph. 5:11; 2 Thess. 3:6

Festus

Paul imprisoned under, Acts 25; 26

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among people, John 18:36; James
4:2
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1 Tim. 1:18; 2 Tim. 4:7; Heb.
12:4

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14:54; Luke 22:55; John 18:18;
21:9; Acts 28:2
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Luke 12:49; Acts 2:3; Heb. 1:7;
12:29; James 3:5
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20:14
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3:13; 1 Pet. 1:7

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8:8; Luke 3:11; James 2:15
God as the source of, Matt. 6:25;
Acts 14:17; 2 Cor. 9:10
right to eat, Mark 7:19; Rom. 14;
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